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A STRANGER AT THE DOLPHIN

THE window of the Dolphin's best parlour was open ; everything within the room had been brought to such a degree of cleanliness and polish in honour of the new guest, that the new guest himself was a little wearied by it. He, indeed, was a master in the art of finish, but he always stayed proportion on the human side of perfection, and in this case would have been glad to see a little dimness somewhere. He pushed back the casement to its fullest width, and rejoiced to see a little spring dust float in with the breeze.

He was a man whose youth fitted him with the same precision as his dress ; neither was extravagant ; both were happily disposed. His black silk stockings and breeches, his vest, sprinkled with an embroidery of sober blossoms, and his flowing coat, the simple lace at wrists and breast, all were designed and worn with the balance of happy instinct. He had the carriage of a man who respects his body, partly for his own sake and partly for the world's.

The aspect of the sunny, deserted street pleased him. His glance passed across to the great church, great even in the only portion that remained, the chancel. The other walls were ruinous and roofless, spiked with flowering grasses and budding wall-flowers. The place suited his purpose ;

it was on the verge of the impossible that any one should find that he was there, or, if they discovered it, that they would trouble to post after him. Not that he was there upon any criminal errand ; but a criminal errand might have been more easily forgiven than the actual matter in hand.

When a man has reached a certain definite stage in the pursuit of any folly it is an infinite and most pleasing satisfaction to him to assure himself that he is a fool. The inmate of the Dolphin's parlour did not spare himself the epithet ; but since it pleased him, in this instance, to play the part to the end, the assurance only made him smile. He had come down with his own horses, resting them by the way ; they were now in clean stables, and he had given them their oats with his own hand. His coachman was asleep, muzzy with Sussex ale ; his valet was unpacking his baggage. No one had recognised him, because he had stumbled across no traces of familiar folks. The name he had given to the people of the inn was only partly his own ; his servants were faithful. So far, then, he felt himself secure.

An unnecessary, and indeed unusual, instinct of precaution kept him in his inn until dusk. His dinner was already ordered ; he had made a point of measuring the resources of his host in

that matter five minutes after his arrival, considering it due to himself and his traditions to dine well. Half an hour before the appointed time he stepped out into the street.

Sunset still lingered, and he made his way towards a point which seemed to promise a clear sight of the sea-meadows which he knew to stretch for miles on that coast. Descending a slight hill, he found himself in the shadow of a great stone gate, from which the road swept down abruptly into the plain below. To the right of the gate he found a level platform, sheltered from the wind and furnished with a stone seat. The place was deserted and he took possession of the look-out with a pleasing sense of being under the especial guidance of Providence. Below, as he had heard, lay interminable pastures dotted with sheep. At that season, it being the time of lambs, they were busy with a bleating populace, the sound of which came to him mingled with the call of waters on the coast. The few scattered farmsteads, protected from the wind by guardian trees, sent forth homely trails of smoke into the still air. "I wonder," said the watcher to himself, "which of them it is?" To the east his glance was arrested by the black mass of Hillbury, crowned by its church.

He turned away satisfied, being no man to hurry matters beyond their proper pace. Given opportunity, he took it to his bosom as a friend; if opportunity failed, he was ready to force things to an extremity; but his experience had taught him that opportunity seldom failed.

Candles were lit in his room and between the undrawn curtains he had a view of white napery, clean silver, and shining glasses. The sight brought a smile into his face, for he had fasted for close upon seven hours. He entered, closed the shutters, drew

the curtains, and, thus secure from observation, sat down to dine.

The landlord himself served the first two dishes, and then retired in favour of his maid. She was impressed by the stranger's manner, by the ring that shone upon his finger, by the air of conferring a favour with which he permitted himself to be attended. He, on his part, felt himself in pleasant quarters. He was in the mood to admire the girl's comeliness because, in comparison with another lady in his mind, she only reached the comparative of beauty. The girl caught his eye upon her and blushed.

"That blush becomes you," he said smiling; "never forget how to use it. In the world there are women who would give a fortune for the gift. Will you tell your master I wish to see him?" She curtsied and went. The Dolphin seldom had such guests, she thought, and so handsome, too.

The landlord came, his face shining, his short person swelling to meet a compliment. He assumed a dignity that almost overcame the curvature of his saddle-bowed legs.

"Your dinner was excellent."

"Your worship is too good."

"But the wine, although fair enough, not exactly to my taste."

The landlord smiled at the wall. "Your worship has a fancy for good liquor?" he asked.

"I have every fancy for it, and I have always understood that here, in Churchsea, one might be always sure of getting it."

"Now where, if I may be so bold as to ask, did you hear that, sir?"

"No matter," said the other; "the source was safe."

"Now," said the landlord, "we're getting on. We poor folk have to be so careful. We must live, sir."

"And to live you find it cheaper to pay no duty."

"Oh, sir, we pay some duty."

"Well, well, bring me a bottle of your best."

"What does your honour say to an old, old Hermitage?"

"Bring it," said the stranger promptly, "and a glass for yourself. Nay, say two bottles, and be careful how you carry them." He waited in an attitude of easy contemplation for the sound of returning feet. The landlord's conscience towards his cellar was of more importance, at the moment, than his conscience towards his King.

A bottle was uncorked with every circumstance of reverence, and the stranger's nostrils dilated to greet the delicate perfume that was diffused about the room. He raised his glass and held it between himself and the light; he passed it dexterously beneath his nose; then he smiled upon the host with invitation in his eyes. "Sit down," he said, "fill for yourself. This indeed is wine. I ask no questions; I only congratulate you upon your taste." He sipped, and set down the glass with contentment, curling his lips. "Excellent," he went on, "excellent; would I had my cellar full of it. One does not ask the price of such a wine; one drinks and forgets about the reckoning. To be able to forget the reckoning is a doubtful gift in the conduct of life; but here we only forget for the night, and pay, or try to pay in the morning."

The landlord blinked at his guest over the rim of his half empty glass. A life of much conviviality had somewhat dulled the sharpness of his intellect. Meanings reached him slowly; by the time he grasped them the application was some minutes in the rear.

"And now," said the other, "let me hear something about Churchsea,—what you do here, why you stay here, whatever happens here."

"Nothing," said the landlord.

"You do nothing?"

"Yes, yes, we work hard." He wagged his head as though to prove it, and his hand caressed an empty glass.

"Fill up, friend, and let me give you a health. First, the King." They rose and drank it, refilled, and resumed their seats. The stranger pondered. Then he raised his glass and said: "To the most beautiful woman in Churchsea."

The landlord drank obediently, this time the stranger only standing. "And who," said the landlord, "may you consider her to be, your worship?"

"Nay, I but drink to an abstract beauty, out of universal reverence for the sex,—for the beautiful of the sex. To whom, in all Churchsea, would you allow the honour?"

"I'm too old and too hard-pressed to mind such matters, sir. Once I had an eye for wenches; but now, they're all alike to me."

"You're in a very sorry case, my friend."

"Maybe so, and maybe not. Lord, how the world goes mad after a woman! And yet, sir, they don't improve with age, like wine."

"Uncork the second bottle; you shall be warmed into appreciation yet. You talk but poor treason. Do men improve, forsooth? We all have our youth once, and thank God for it. When we grow old, we grow foolish. To be young is to be happy; and to love is always to be young."

He stretched forth his legs beneath the table and fell into a moment's muse. The landlord watched him like a sleepy hound before a fire. "Ah, sir," he said, drawing in his breath, "we have some rare beauties here."

"Ha, ha, so you are not blind? And who are they?"

"I can but run over a name or two, and what use is that? A name is no mirror, sir; you can't see a lady's face in it."

"Let us have the names before we decide that."

"There's Margaret Vole, the Squire's lass, with great dark eyes that set men sparring, so I hear."

"The name offends me. Vole! Why Vole? And who next?"

"There's Betsy Drayton, with a pretty lump of money, so they say,—but the wilfullest wench that ever turned lad's head. She loves 'em all, and cannot choose one from the lot. Lord, they crowd about her like wasps about a honey-pot."

"The name is well enough; good English, too, and winsome. In time she will learn to play a better part. Are there any more?"

"One more I think on, Susan Fuller. But she's too proud, because she's been to London, maybe, and her father has a bit o' land."

"That name," said the stranger, "is sweeter than the rest." And to his heart he said, "Her face is sweeter than the name, her dear self sweeter than them all." He went on aloud: "And where does this last lady live?"

"Down on the marsh," said the landlord; "a white house betwixt here and Hillbury."

"And how," said the other, filling the glasses once more, "would you find the way to it?"

"Go under the gate nighest the church and down the hill, till you come upon the White Road. Then turn off sharp to the right and follow the little pathway by a dyke. Then turn to the left and keep straight on. There's no more path after that; you must just feel your way and jump over the ditches. 'Tis a lonely place, but fat land; you ask whose sheep are best; Fuller's will be the word."

The stranger raised his eyes to the tall clock that ticked heavily in the corner; the gilt hands pointed to nine o'clock. He rose and shook himself. "I'll take the air for half an hour,"

he said; "then I shall sleep like a baby. Let all your servants go to bed. My man will prepare my room; he knows my ways. Good-night, friend, and rest well." The landlord swayed before him to the door and let him forth. He already loved his guest; to drink his own best vintage warmed him to the soul.

The stranger stretched himself when the door had closed behind him, shook his laces straight and laughed. He was in the mood to appreciate; he had dined well, he had drunk comfortably and of the best, and he was in love. As he turned by the church, and set out upon the road, a few yards of which he already knew, he took the building into his confidence. It seemed to throw a salutation to him in its shadow; he nodded at its gray tower with no sense of irreverence.

A thin wisp of moon was just disappearing; in that flat land of great horizons it seemed to linger, passing with reluctance from its station above human affairs. The stars trembled in their places, and a spring wind was abroad. The Dolphin's guest walked briskly on, passed under the gate, went down the hill and found his feet upon the White Road. Then he turned to the right, struck the path by the dyke, and continued his journey without any fear of going astray. His instinct served him well, for after half an hour's devious progression he saw a light. It seemed no more than thirty yards away, but it took him almost as many minutes to reach it, by reason of the dykes he had to avoid or cross, and the entire absence of any definite pathway.

At last he stood by a low stone wall topped with a few straggling heads of gilly-flower. The light shone from a curtained window at the end. There was not even a shadow on the blind to suggest what might be within; but it was safe to conjecture

that some one was there, and he accordingly bowed to the light on the assumption that the some one was a lady. Then he worked his way cautiously round to the front of the house. There was no light here; not even an upper window sent forth the signal so sweet to lovers. He rested his hand for a moment on the gate, but did not lift the latch. "Not now," he said to himself; "her family (there is always a family) might ask too many questions. Dear child!" He continued his journey to the other side, which was black and silent as the front. Low farm-buildings stood at some short distance from the place behind, and from them came, now and again, the sound of horses moving in their stalls, the stir of cattle in their straw, or the low bleat of a ewe. It was all very peaceful and sweet; and as the stranger looked up at the star-flecked sky and back again at the house which lay near him he felt, somehow, not that he was out of place, but that he was engaged upon an enterprise for which his previous experience had given him no precedent.

He stood there for ten minutes, lost in secret contemplation of his own chances and the risk of failure. So far as failure went, he dismissed the thought as quickly as it came; it was success that was likely to make difficulties. But since he had spent all his life in happy opposition to nearly every member of his family, and loved them none the less on that account, he made light of whatever the future was likely to throw across his way. "I wonder," he thought, "whether I should call here now, or go away and come to-morrow. One never knows in these country places. Perhaps her father's there. He's a very amiable fool, and amusing, but now I don't want him to amuse me."

At this point the back door opened, and a girl walked quickly across the

yard to the stable. He drew himself up and took a deep, inspiring breath. "It's Sue herself," he murmured. "How good the gods are, and what a walk she has!"

A latch clicked and the girl came slowly back. She wore a light gown of some soft material that made no sound; a band of white about the low neck seemed to throw a touch of light up into her face. The stranger leaned forward over the wall. "Sue," he called softly. She paused, her head poised to listen, the breath stayed upon her lips. "Sue," he called again. She turned and made a step or two towards him; then paused again and listened; at the third calling of her name, she picked up her skirts and ran to meet the voice. The stranger stretched out his hands and caught her in his arms.

"Little one, Sue," he said; "kiss me." She put up her mouth to him and kissed him with her whole heart. He held her face between his hands and kissed both her eyes and then her lips again, before he could find a word. "You forgive me for coming?" he asked.

"No; I can't forgive you. It was very unwise and very wrong, Mr. Thorburn."

"Philip," he pleaded.

"Mr. Thorburn," she repeated, turning her face aside.

"Sue!" he said.

"Mr. Philip Thorburn," she said slowly, "you must go away."

"When may I come back?"

"You may come to-morrow,—but ask to see my brother."

"Ah," thought Mr. Thorburn, "she has a brother!" Then he said aloud: "Very well, Sue, I'll come, to see your brother. What's his name?"

"Mr. John Fuller."

"Dear child, how precise you are to-night. But I forgot; down here you're people of importance. Where's your father?"

"In London."

"Mr. William Fuller is in London ; good."

"Why good?" she asked.

"Because I want to make love to you."

"You mustn't," she said. "My brother would be angry."

"I'm very sorry," he said, "but if he is, it will make no difference to me. Perhaps you thought when I saw you up there in town that I was only playing. I really love you, Sue."

"Of course you do," she said; "if you hadn't I would never have kissed you."

"No," he said, "I suppose you wouldn't. But I came down here to tell you how much I loved you, and to ask you to be my wife." She moved a step away from him. Before she came back the Dolphin's guest had had time to forget that there was anything else in the world but the love that had made him come to Churchsea.

"I do love you," she said, "I do love you. But to marry!" She had her arms about his neck and crooned the words softly. "I'm so young. Do you know how old I am?"

"No," he said, "I don't; but you're old enough for me."

"Eighteen," she said.

"Child," he said, very seriously, "promise me what I ask."

"Will it do to-morrow?" she asked.

"Why not to-night?"

"I can't see you; and when I promise I would rather look at you."

"Then let it be to-morrow," he said. "And, dearest, try to understand just what it means."

"Oh, I understand," she whispered.

A man's voice from the house called "Sue."

"That's my brother," she said.

"Good-night."

"That's Mr. John Fuller, is it? One kiss,—good-night."

The voice called again and the girl ran quickly into the house. After the closing of the door Thorburn did not linger. He picked his way carefully back to the White Road, thinking, as he went, of the sweet candour of Sue and of the awful hubbub that would rage about him when his world knew. And there was something, too, for Sue to learn; but he had no misgiving about that, since he himself would light her to the knowledge.

At half-past eight o'clock the following morning Mr. Thorburn's valet went into his master's room. Mr. Thorburn was asleep. He had slept so soundly that even the jingling bustle of an arrival beneath his window had not disturbed his dreams. The amplitude of the bed in which he lay was out of all proportion to the needs of any human creature. Our ancestors, truly, loved to rest and die beneath heroic canopies.

The man awoke Mr. Thorburn. He sat up and stretched himself.

"Draw the blind and open the window," he said. "Ah," he went on when this was done; "what a morning, Hyde, and what a sun!"

"Yes, my lord."

"Sir, sir! I am not my lord here. Must I tell you so for the hundredth time?"

"I beg your worship's pardon. But I cannot forget your rank, sir; it comes hard to me."

"You must forget, Hyde, until I tell you to remember. Bring me some chocolate." The man hesitated. "Well," said the other, "have you anything to say?"

Hyde withdrew a little and paused again. "Some one has been asking for you, my lord, sir!"

"Who?" asked Mr. Thorburn, with one leg out of bed.

"Mr. Luttrell, sir."

The leg went back again and Mr. Thorburn's face manifested lively annoyance. "Damn Mr. Luttrell!"

he cried; "tell him I'm dead!" Hyde smiled uneasily, glanced out of the window, rubbed his hands together and brought his gaze, still vacant, back to the bed. "Tell him I'm dead, do you hear, or likely to die, or sick. Say anything, and bid him good-day."

"He'd never believe it," Hyde said. "He'd laugh at me. You know his way, sir."

"And a devilish impertinent way it is. What right has the fellow to follow me? If he won't go, order some breakfast for two and say I'll join him in half an hour. Mr. Luttrell and I, Hyde, will have a talk together."

When Mr. Thorburn came down he found Mr. Luttrell sitting on the edge of the table, playing with his sword-hilt. A gray cat watched him from the window-seat.

"This visit is unexpected," Mr. Thorburn said after they had greeted one another.

"And you would doubtless add, unwarranted, my lord."

"That depends upon the reason for it."

"The reason is to beg you to think twice before it is too late."

"My dear Luttrell, I have thought fifty times and the way is clear before me."

"Have you considered your family?"

"I answer with another question; has my family ever considered me?"

"If I may say so, the Earl of Templemore should act on higher grounds."

"I beg you to remember that here I am not the Earl of Templemore. I am plain Philip Thorburn; the title is in abeyance."

"I rejoice to hear it, my lord."

"And why, my dear Luttrell, do you rejoice?"

"Because I gather from it that your errand is less serious than I had imagined."

"Explain please. Our breakfast waits; before we eat let us understand each other."

Luttrell slipped from the table and stood with folded arms against the wall. The Earl of Templemore regarded him with amused interest; "Come," he said, "speak out, cousin."

"Your lordship is good enough to remind me that we have a touch of the same blood."

"Tut, man, leave my *lording* alone. Give me the name you knew me by before this unsought honour put a mask on all my friends. Call me Philip and be done with it."

"You may remember, then, that in those far off days we sometimes changed our names for safety's sake. It was then that ladies wore the masks."

Templemore's face darkened; but as he paced the room it cleared again. "You remind me," he said, "of what one would willingly forget. We must all be young once, Luttrell; we must all play the fool and truant once, nay, a score of times, and be none the worse for it. I do not propose at my time of life to set up for moralist. But here rings the true coin. This is not one of those. I take my name of Thorburn because she knows me by no other."

"And when she learns the other, Philip, what then?"

"That is what I propose to discover. I remember, Luttrell, that she is a woman, perhaps hardly more than a child. If she loves me the name will make no difference. We people have a habit of holding ourselves too dear. My name is an accident; it is I, I who am everything. My name does not make love, my name does not fight, my name does not play the villain; *I* do these things. As for my family, well, they are my family and will hold by me. Besides, I propose to bring new, clean blood into a somewhat wasted stock; they will be my debtors. Go back to

town, but at a slower pace. I assure you this is a charming country and will repay any time you like to spend upon the road. Or better still, stay here as my guest and take a lesson from my wisdom."

"I will be your guest to the extent of breakfast. Afterwards, if you still hold to your purpose and refuse to return with me, I must go alone."

"I shall certainly refuse."

They sat in silence for some time, Templemore without a shadow of embarrassment, the other watchfully, like a chicken or a cat. Luttrell spoke first. "Since you are determined to go through with this very doubtful affair, Philip, how is it that the lady knows only half your name?"

"Because I met her under unusual circumstances; mainly because her father, like most of the world, is something of a fool." Luttrell nodded acquiescence. Templemore smiled and went on: "I have a habit, as you know, of wandering into strange places and stranger company. There are certain societies which presume to sympathise with the bloody-minded villains who are murdering Frenchmen, and women too, in the name of France. To one of these societies I had an easy entrance, of course under the name of Thorburn. And there one evening I found old Fuller and his daughter,—he nodding with wine and treason, she alternately frightened and ashamed. Why the foolish fellow took her there I don't pretend to guess. I often went to these meetings, not to agree with the sentiments expressed there, but to express my own sentiments to the one jewel set in that showy and harmless fustian."

"Did you not consider it your duty," asked Luttrell, "to your order and the King to have these revolutionaries suppressed?"

"Why suppress flies? They only buzz. My duty lay in the direction of my pleasure, my honest pleasure.

That is why I am here. Let me give you this wing or a little of that cold pasty—leveret, I think. No? I cannot press you to remain because, as you see, my occupation gives me companionship enough. My respects to my family; they are really too solicitous. When I return to town you shall hear of me."

Luttrell being thus happily dismissed, the Earl of Templemore spent an hour in contemplative idleness. But as he was pleasantly engaged in dwelling upon the last turn of fortune, all Churchsea was being made free of the secret of his name; for the girl who waited on him had not thought it unmannerly to listen at the door, and she fled from that post with the name of the Earl of Templemore filling her pretty mouth and silly head. She blurted it out to every soul she saw, and by noon the truth had reached as far as Fuller's farm, being carried there by Fuller's head-shepherd, who had called at the Dolphin for his morning ale.

Early in the afternoon Templemore set out to call upon Sue's brother, that Mr. John Fuller whose voice he had heard the night before. He did not notice the added deference of the landlord who met him in the porch; he did not observe the inquiring heads that popped out of doorways after he had passed. As a matter of fact Churchsea was doing itself honour on his account, for it is a place apt to glory in itself and in any accidental circumstance that may be made to serve as a spur to pride.

The great pasture-lands were vivid with spring; the White Road cut them like a strip of ribbon on a green cloth; the blue line of the sea glittered beyond the high natural breakwater of heavy pebbles. Templemore descended into the plain and made his way without a single misjudgment of the route to the gate of Fuller's farm. He waited there for a moment

hoping to see Sue's face, or at least the flutter of her gown. But he saw nothing and heard only the bleating and stir of innumerable sheep. He lifted the latch, entered and knocked briskly at the door.

He was again disappointed, for he had expected Sue to open to him. A red-cheeked country maid, in a blush of excitement, ushered him, with many bobbing curtsies, into a parlour on the right. There she left him with a final bob.

Templemore looked about him with reverence. This was the room which so often held Sue. Indeed, some of her work was stretched upon an embroidery frame, and near it was a low chair,—Sue's chair. He sat down in it, and felt himself instantly exalted. The room was heavily furnished with old mahogany, almost black. Upon a sideboard shone a few silver cups and tankards; above it hung two crossed swords. The window-ledge was closely packed with flowers, which served to give sweetness and an intangible air of purity to the place. The grate was fireless, filled with dry rushes, which rustled to the tune of the wind in the chimney. Templemore had hardly completed his survey of the room when the door opened and John Fuller stood before him. He bowed stiffly; the Earl swept him a profound reverence.

"You do us too much honour, my lord," Fuller said, not moving from where he stood. He fumbled awkwardly with his hands, and his colour was high and defiant.

"How,—my lord?" said Templemore, for an instant, but for an instant only, pricked in his composure.

"Down here we are not ashamed of our names."

Templemore smiled and offered his snuff-box. "Nor am I ashamed of mine," he said.

The other took a pinch of snuff, a large pinch, hesitatingly. He was

extremely angry, up in arms to defend his sister, and yet doubtful as to the best method to conduct a quick assault to victory. "You saw my sister last night," he said.

"I did," said Templemore, "and the sight of her, though it was nearly dark, gave light to my eyes. You should be proud of your sister, Mr. Fuller, as, indeed, you doubtless are."

"I am so proud of her," said the other, "that I will not allow gentlemen who change their names to wander about my premises at night and play the gallant to her. If they wish to come, let it be by day, when they must deal with me first."

Templemore bit his lip and half turned away. Then he faced Fuller smilingly again, and himself took snuff. "I admire your heat," he said. "You are a very able champion, and I make no doubt your hand is as ready as your word; but you misunderstand me and I am anxious to put myself in the right with you. I remember that you are Miss Fuller's brother, in itself no mean distinction, and it is your pleasure and your privilege to defend her. I never came upon your ground last night,—my progress was blocked by a very substantial wall. My meeting with your sister was an accident."

"She told me so."

"And I trust that you believed her. Take my advice and never doubt a lady's word. I am your senior by about six years, I judge; my experience may be of service to you. Always believe until the contrary is proved."

"Your lordship is too fine for me. I put two and two together, and act on it. Why did you change your name?"

The manner of the question made Templemore's blood tingle; but he checked the answer that was hot upon his lips and took a moment's thought. "Your question," he said, "hurts me because it impugns my honour. I

hold my honour very dear. You are inclined to doubt it, and I am bound to admit you have an appearance of justice on your side; but I beg you to be as just to me as I wish to be to you. I assure you, on this honour which I hope to keep unstained to the end of my life, that the changing of my name was nothing. Your sister knew me first as Philip Thorburn; the Earl of Templemore she had probably never heard of. And may I now ask how you came to know my title?"

"My father's shepherd brought the news from the Dolphin this morning."

"They have long ears at the Dolphin," said Templemore.

"At the Dolphin they know everything," said Fuller simply.

There was a moment's pause, during which Sue's brother rapped his heavy boots together. He was obviously unconvinced. "The fellow is almost a gentleman," thought Templemore. "There is blood in this family; he means to fight me." He added aloud: "Now that we understand each other, Mr. Fuller, will you be good enough to ask your sister to have a word with me?"

"I understand nothing of the whole matter, but that I will have nothing to do with it. Why your lordship should choose to pay us attentions which we neither merit nor desire I will not presume to question too closely. I have the honour to wish your lordship a very good morning." And with that he opened the door and stood aside to let his visitor pass.

"Am I to count you as an enemy?" asked Templemore, quite unruffled, flicking a speck of dust from his sleeve.

"In this matter it is my duty to be your enemy."

"You mistake your duty. But since the lady must be consulted first I can go no further at present. Perhaps your father——"

"I act for my father, who is absent."

"He has a candid agent; and I

will not be less candid, Mr. Fuller. I shall see your sister, you may be sure of that. To tell you how and when I mean to see her would be unwise. You proclaim yourself my enemy, but, believe me, I am not yours. I am sorry that my title offends you; I regret that you doubt my honour; some day you will think well of both. For the present, good-bye." He bowed himself from the room and so out into the clear spring air again. At twenty paces from the house he turned and saw young Fuller standing at the door. He raised his eyes and caught Sue's face glancing between the curtains of an upper window. He uncovered and kissed his hand to her. Then, without waiting to see the effect of this upon her brother, he walked rapidly across the level green to the White Road.

Having reached his inn he called for the landlord, who entered the room with shame and awe in his mottled face. Templemore stood facing him. As the man turned to close the door he stopped him. "Leave it open," he said; "then we shall know that no one is listening at the other side. When a gentleman gives his name it is the business of a host to respect it, even though he guesses it to be assumed."

"It was the maid, my lord," stammered the other.

"Of course,—it always is the maid. Choose your women with more discretion, or if that is impossible, keep a tighter hand upon them. It would be best to choose them dumb."

"If your grace will overlook it this once."

"I can do nothing else, since there is no other decent inn in Churchsea,—and after all, your wine is excellent. Let me have two more bottles to-night, and see that I am not disturbed till then. You may go now,—wait, in half an hour send me a lad who can carry a message quickly."

When the landlord had gone, Templemore sat down to pen and ink. He had an idea, and time was short. When the lad came the note was sealed and addressed. "Take this to Mr. John Fuller, at Fuller's Farm," he said, "and deliver it to him yourself. Bring me an answer." He had written :

SIR,—If you will meet me to-night on the east side of the castle on the marsh (I don't know what name it has) at nine o'clock I will explain everything clearly to you. As you do not wish me to see your sister (poor child ! you are too hard upon her) this will satisfy you that I am honourably anxious to be just to you. Let me have a word from you by my messenger. I shall come unarmed.—TEMPLEMORE.

Within an hour the boy returned panting, with the answer, written on a corner torn from the Earl's note ; it consisted of the one word, *Yes*.

To say that Templemore was hopeful would be to say too little ; he was confident. He never reckoned with the possibility of failure ; he meant to have Sue at any hazard. If all Churchsea had stood arrayed against him, with Mayor and Jurats at their head, he would have snapped his fingers at them all, called to his postillions to ride on, and have driven down the entire corporation with the utmost composure. This he would have done if Sue were beside him ; otherwise, he would have treated the dignitaries of the ancient town with amused respect.

He dined carefully, as he had done the night before, and called in the landlord to crack the second bottle with him as though the creature had not sinned against him. He was in the best of spirits, for he had Sue always before his eyes ; her face danced in the reflections from his glass, her lips pouted in the early blossoms that stood upon the table, her hands beckoned to him from every corner of the room at once. He saw himself triumphantly carrying her

away to town ; he imagined the hush that would fall upon any drawing-room to which she gave her fresh beauty and young grace ; he smiled at the fancy of her introduction to his family. But most of all he liked to see her in her own surroundings, a child of the marshes and of the wind, of the sun and of the dew.

Before he set out he handed his sword to the landlord to keep till his return. In an access of vinous sentiment that gentleman kissed the hilt. Templemore crossed the threshold of the Dolphin unarmed.

The night was fine, but the sky was streaked with trails of cloud, through which the stars shone fitfully like winking tapers. A chill wind was abroad. The inn-sign creaked to and fro like an unlatched door, and from the marshes there rose a murmur of bending rushes and tremulous grass. Templemore made his way briskly downwards and turned his steps towards the castle which he had appointed as the place of meeting.

This castle, which rose, a huge excrescence on the plain, between Churchsea and Hillbury, was ruinous and desolate ; a place built for defence which had never been assaulted, a stronghold impotent in its strength. It was haunted by birds and winds ; at a time when the plains lay breathless under a July sun some stir of air always seemed to search out the circling masonry. At night it raised its protest to the stars, a protest of inutility, of an effort to combat an attack that never came ; but since it had been raised for the defence of England, Templemore felt a friendly warmth towards the shadow which its great walls cast, and he approached it with a sense of comradeship.

He was at the place of meeting first, and had made the entire circuit of the walls twice before he was aware of a figure that moved quickly towards him. He stepped out into the

moonlight and saluted it. Fuller returned his greeting stolidly and stood waiting.

"Let us walk in this direction," said Templemore; "the wind strikes cold, and it is as well to keep the blood moving."

"If we go this way we shall reach the farm in half an hour."

"Precisely what I should wish. I intended to go there after my interview with you; we will go together."

"I say," said Fuller, "that we had better settle our business first, and until then turn our backs upon the farm and walk towards Hillbury."

"You are prejudiced; but as you will. Towards Hillbury, then, Mr. Fuller, and let the step be brisk." They turned and paced together, while Templemore continued: "Now, my dear Mr. Fuller, let me be plain with you. I came down here to see your sister, and I saw her last night. That was an accident, but a most happy accident. I flatter myself that she was glad to see me; the child has not learned the trick of hiding her heart. I love her, Mr. Fuller, very dearly, and I have told her so. She asked me to see you. This afternoon you were not disposed (shall I say?) to be reasonable. You were, perhaps, naturally annoyed to hear about that trifling matter of my name. I assure you that to-day I was going to tell your sister all about it, and to beg for a forgiveness which I cannot doubt she would have given. All that remains to be done is for you to take me back with you now, for she will surely await your return in great anxiety, and allow me to make my explanations for myself."

"In answer to that I have a message from my sister to you. I was to tell you that she knew Mr. Thorburn, but did not know, and did not wish to see, the Earl of Templemore; and she left the rest in my hands."

Templemore stopped in his walk,

stooped and picked up something from the ground. "What is this?" he said. "Ah, a piece of rope."

"Left here by my shepherds. The men are careless; I will rate them over it."

Templemore walked on, trailing the rope from his right hand. "So she gave you this message for me? What did you say to her before you dragged such words from her?"

"I said what it was my duty to say, to warn her."

"You seem very fond of that word duty, Mr. Fuller. Did you think it your duty to lie to her, to impeach my honour before her, to suggest what she herself would never have sullied her sweet mind by thinking of?"

"I represented your position to her and the impossibility of any good springing from your presence here."

"I see, the old story. You wound where you should protect, and make a virtue of imputing wicked motives. Sir, you have played the fool instead of the brother; you have made the child unhappy where it was your privilege to make her glad. I am ashamed of you. Because a man is labelled with a title, is he therefore a devil and a cheat? Before you presume to advise, learn to be generous. You have done more harm to-day than you can do good in the rest of your life. Talk to me of duty—pish!"

The Earl of Templemore was extremely angry. A vision of Sue's tearful eyes made the blood prick into his face. John Fuller, too, was angry; partly because he clung to the dwindling conviction that he was right, partly because he feared he might be wrong, and partly on account of the tone which Templemore had unconsciously assumed. They both stopped short and faced each other. The castle, now half a mile away, stood heavily against the sky-line; close beside them a strongly built shepherd's hut rose from the moonlit pasture.

"Your lordship may 'pish'!" said Fuller, "as much as you like. I stand for my family, and as good blood as your own."

"As for the blood," said the other, "I grant you it's good enough. I am going to the farm at once to see her."

"You shall not go," cried Fuller.

"Prevent me, then," said Templemore, grown quite cool again and turning his face towards Churchsea. Fuller laid a heavy hand upon his shoulder and drew him back.

"So, so," said Templemore, softly, "we will try a fall. As you see, I am unarmed. I am going to the farm; you are anxious to prevent me. Very good; when you are ready, we will begin." He then threw the rope on the grass, measured the distance between it and the hut with a careful eye, threw his body forward and closed with his antagonist.

Fuller had the advantage in strength, Templemore in the art and resources of the game. They swayed about beneath the stars like fantastic shadows; the constellations whirled before their eyes. The pressure of Fuller's iron arms made Templemore's breath leave him in heavy jerks. The steam of their breathing veiled them in a moving mist. Templemore, at great risk, feigned a fall, which brought him within reach of the rope. Then he stooped suddenly, put all his strength into one throw, lifted Fuller six inches from the ground and sent him heavily upon his back. For a moment he lay half dazed. Templemore seized the rope, pinioned him dexterously and securely, dragged him into the hut, and, as he began to stir again, slipped out and jammed to the door.

"I am going to see your sister now Mr. John Fuller," he said. "I shall be back in an hour and a half. I could have done it in an hour if you hadn't winded me. Don't exert yourself to make a noise. When I come back I shall come as your friend."

He did not wait for any answer from his prisoner, but turned towards Churchsea and set out for the farm at the top of his speed and in the most exalted spirits. In any other circumstances he would have been stopped a score of times by unexpected dykes and waterways; but he was a lover, with victory behind and the prospect of victory before. He went straight on, and it happened that that was the only way. The levels stretched about him to right and left; on one side the sea called, on the other the wind went lingeringly, as loth to travel landwards. The voices of the night, the eyes of stars, the infinite haunting sense of solitude moved him not at all. His goal was in the eyes of one girl, his rest in her caresses, the end of his life to win her from the world of other men. His temperament, happily, served him at every point. He recognised this as he sped onward, and thanked the fates that they had made him light of limb as well as light of heart.

He reached the farm, vaulted the low wall, and crossed a flower-bed to the door. His quick summons was answered instantly, and the light footstep told him who it was that came. The lifting latch brought his heart into his throat; the open door gave Sue into his arms.

"Where's John?" she gasped, when her lips were free, trying to be firm and indifferent, but failing as women so sweetly fail.

"Mr. John Fuller," said Templemore, "is awaiting my return on the marsh. For the present he is safe, and, I trust, comfortable. I know this room; come in here; everything, I see, is ready for me, a little fire, a good light, and you!" He closed the door of the room in which his morning interview had been conducted, and stood before her, feeding his eyes upon her face. "Your brother," he went on laughingly, "gave me your

very unkind message. I have come to hear it from yourself."

"It was quite true," Sue said. "I don't know you. I knew, and liked—"

"Liked?" echoed Templemore.

"Loved, then," said Sue, "Philip Thorburn; but you are some one else. I don't know you; you must go away,—go away," she repeated, sobbingly, "and never come to Churchsea again."

"Of course," he said, "I shall go away and never see you any more. Of course I have come to say good-bye."

She looked at him with wide and startled eyes. Her breast shook, her hands were pressed together before her gray gown. "Yes," she said; "good-bye."

Templemore laughed aloud and took her face between his hands. "Look at me," he said, "and tell me that you do not love me. You told me to come to you to-day, and when you could see me your answer would be ready. I am here, not to say good-bye, little one, but to ask you to be my wife. Your brother, Mr. John Fuller (I speak with all respect), presumed to doubt my honour. For that crime he is a prisoner; if you wish him to be released, give me your promise."

"You have hurt John," she cried, "and he was only doing what he thought was right!"

"John is quite safe. As a brother-in-law he may be well enough; as your brother only he lacks discretion. Sue, my dear, dear girl, I offer you all I have; be my wife."

"But you are a lord!" she said. "How could I marry a lord?"

"Pardon me," he said, "but as to marriage, lords marry precisely as other men."

"But I could never, never do it!"

"I will not ask you to live in London more than a few weeks in the year. We will live here if you wish it. It will be cheaper, and though my name is rich, my estates are very lean. I dare say, Sue, that your father has more than I."

"Oh, dear," said Sue, "I thought lords were always very rich and proud."

"There is a tradition to that effect. They are sometimes proud of their wives; I wish to be proud of mine."

Sue pondered, but as Templemore's arm was about her, we may assume that her knitted brows did not cover any very earnest thought. "If John," she said, "consents, perhaps I will marry you, Philip. Where is John?"

"At present, unless he has escaped, which I think unlikely, he is tied up in a shepherd's hut two miles away."

"Did *you* tie him up?" she asked reproachfully.

"It was my only chance, Sue. Shall I bring him to you, and tell him on the way that you have promised to be my wife?"

"If you bring him quite safe and sound you may tell him what you like. Oh, go to him at once."

"But your father?" said Templemore, pausing as he turned to go.

"My father," said Sue, "will agree to whatever John says."

"Mr. John Fuller," said Templemore, returning for a kiss, "is a man of character; his temper will have had time to cool. I shall see you once more to-night. You must see your brother safe before you go to bed."

Templemore took his way across the plain again. It seemed that the keen air, the jewelled sky, the grass beneath his feet, existed only for him and Sue. His dominion became unlimited; his estate of love was fenceless, without bounds, wider than the world. As he neared the hut he broke into a song, which rang out over that level land as clear as bells—

My love, oh, she is bonny as the blossom
on the thorn,

Sing, heigh and ho, for her eyes;
And all the wildwood budded in the
hour that she was born,

Sing, heigh and ho, for her eyes.

No sound came from the hut.

My love, oh, she is tender, and my love,
oh, she is kind,

Sing, heigh and ho, for her heart;
And when she bids me follow I leave all
the world behind,

Sing, heigh and ho, for her heart.

He hammered upon the door. "Are you within, Mr. Fuller?" he cried.

There was still no answer, so Templemore threw himself against the door, which he had jammed so firmly that it only yielded with a splitting of timber. A dim figure was heaving itself up with difficulty in a corner. "Is it possible," said Templemore, "that you have been asleep?"

"There was nothing else to do," said Fuller; "you won fairly, and I was tired."

Templemore cut his bonds and released him. "If you wish to try another fall," he said, "I'm at your service. But there is nothing to quarrel about now; even you will believe in my honour. Sue has promised to be my wife on the condition that I return you safely to her keeping. The only thing you can urge against me is my unfortunate title; I assure you that I will try to live it down."

"If this is so," said Fuller, shaking himself, "I have nothing to say. I've done my duty."

"Admirably," said Templemore; "let us hasten back."

They set out together and Templemore took Fuller, in a friendly manner, by the arm. "Did you," he asked, "really think I was a villain?"

"Yes,—until I saw you. Then I was not sure."

"You are convinced now that you were wrong?"

"Yes; but I wish my sister had made a lower choice."

"Be comforted for that by thinking that I could not have made a higher one. I respect you, Mr. Fuller."

Sue was waiting for them. To be

truthful, she had had small fear for her brother's safety, but she met him as one restored from deadly peril. Templemore stood aside till the comedy was over. Then he said:

"I beg you to dine with me to-morrow at the Dolphin, Mr. Fuller. The landlord is a fool, but he has excellent cellars. We will arrange matters over a bottle."

Sue saw him to the door, and stood with him in the midst of spring odours and the midnight hush. She put her arms about his neck and laid her cheek softly against his. "I am so happy," she said, "so happy. But how can I love you enough? I feel so little; I wish you were not a lord."

"My dearest child," he answered, "thank God you know so little of the world, and we will be careful that the world does not know much of you. 'Tis I who have to learn; I shall sit at the feet, always, of the Countess of Templemore."

They stood silently, Sue lost in wonder at the happiness that thrilled her from the mere contact of hand and hand, and growing at every beat of her pulse more conscious of the amazing beauty of the world. Presently she realised that Templemore was shaking with secret laughter. "Oh," said she wistfully, "why do you laugh?"

"I was thinking," said Templemore, stroking her hair, "I was thinking of your brother's wonderful use of opportunity. To sleep under such conditions!"

"He is very good," said Sue.

"He is admirable," laughed Templemore. Then the mirth faded from his face and heart, and he stooped down to Sue with every instinct of his blood and race turned to a throbbing tenderness for her. "Good-night, little one," he said; "God keep you!"

THROUGH THE SWAMPS TO BENIN.

ONE scorching July afternoon we were lounging beneath the awnings of the Royal Mail Steamer *Loanda*, as that vessel churned her way up the muddy Warri creek, one of the maze of tangled waterways intersecting the delta of the Niger. The yellow water flamed around us like a sheet of molten brass: the very palm fronds seemed limp with heat; and every beverage became lukewarm on its passage from the ice-chest to the thirsty lip. On either side were wastes of mangrove swamps, stretching away as far as the eye could reach, broken here and there by the raw green of the palm trees. The atmosphere was that of the Niger delta, dense and steamy, with something in it besides the heat which seemed to sap the energy of the European.

At last, as the steamer swung round a bend, scaring flocks of screaming parrots by the roar of the mail-gun, the Warri station came in sight. This, as perhaps the finest Government post on the Oil Rivers save Calabar, seems to merit a description. Beyond a steep bank of firm earth, for here was dry land, lay a clearing hewn out of the dense cottonwood forest. In the centre of this rose a handsome wooden house, built, as usual in the Niger country, on piles, in the vain hope of escaping the malaria, surrounded by a wide verandah and roofed with galvanised iron. On either side lay a few straggling factories, the long whitewashed sheds flashing back an intolerable glare, until the tired eyes were glad to turn again towards the green shade of the forest. Such is Warri, and every West African

outpost, from Lagos to Cameroons, more or less resembles it.

When the *Loanda* was moored to the rickety wharf we went ashore in search of Major Crawford,¹ who ruled that district at the head of a few Yoruba black troops. There was a machine gun at either corner of the Residency, and two Yoruba soldiers, tall athletic fellows who, like the Hausa men, have some of the Arab blood of the north in their veins, paced to and fro beneath the verandah. Behind them lay a group of literally naked savages, squatting on the ground in the fierce glare of the sun, and with easy-going African philosophy waiting their trial for wife-stealing, firing on peaceful traders, and similar misdemeanours.

"Major inside court, sah," said the big Mahomedan soldier, and we entered the room. It was a curious scene. The hall below the house proper was packed with a mass of naked black humanity, oily and perspiring; and though every door and window had been opened, the atmosphere was awful. A soldierly man, with the stamp of the West Coast upon him (there is no mistaking any one who has lived long in the feverland), was seated with a weary face at the end of the hall. A doubtful case of ambush and murder was being tried, and the officer leaned forward a little as the black interpreter examined a witness. When he saw us he beckoned us forward, and said, in reference to a request on a former visit, that we might stay and

¹ The late Major Copland-Crawford, D.S.O., who perished in the recent massacre at Benin.

hear the cases, if we cared. Our companion made some remark about the Black Hole of Calcutta, and went hurriedly out into the open air, but we called up our courage and remained. The natives before us were chiefly clad in blue tattoo, and wore their hair knitted up into fantastic plaits. They were men of great stature and breadth of shoulders, wonderfully muscular, for all the Niger tribes practically live with the paddle in their hands, the creeks being the only roads. Some had been arrested by the Yoruba patrol, and some had been sent down voluntarily by their own headmen, to be tried according to the justice of the white men. Stealing wives or slaves, adulterating palm-oil, and participating in abominable Fetichrites were the principal offences; and the Major listened with infinite patience to cases which would have tested the wisdom of Solomon. Witness after witness contradicted one another, for few races can lie like the West African when he makes up his mind to it; and still the Major examined carefully into each minute detail, in spite of the sweltering heat and fetid air, while the Yorubas stood grimly on guard with their rifles in their hands.

At last the court was dismissed for the day, and when darkness settled down and the fever-mist crept out of the forest and spread its ghostly trails across the river, we sat out upon the wide verandah, and the Major discoursed upon the comparative demerits of the climates of India and Africa. It is a melancholy coincidence, but nevertheless a fact, as a certain surgeon in the African mail-boats may remember, if the fever has still spared him, that the last words Major Crawford said to us were these, as nearly as the writer can remember: "India is bad, but with care a strong man may live even in a very unhealthy jungle. Here no man must

expect to live long; life is very uncertain." It may not be out of place to say here that there were few British officers from Gambia to Niger so universally esteemed as Major Crawford. He was marked by a courtly consideration for every one with whom he came in contact, though the bush-tribes found his hand heavy if they provoked him too far. The writer remembers a time when the Major had a despatch to send to the Colonial Office, and in order to save delaying the mail-steamer, he came off to it in a small canoe. He would not allow us to lower the accommodation-ladder, but seizing a line scrambled up the steamer's side till his despatch could be handed on board. A trader's clerk from a third-rate factory would have required a gig and six hands to bring him off: a black official of the Gold Coast Customs would have gasped at the idea of such a lack of ceremony; and yet the holder of the Distinguished Service Order was pleased to do what he could to save trouble to strangers.

At dawn next morning the Loanda resumed her journey and steamed away through the creeks. That was the last the writer saw of Warri, and he has no desire to see it again; the germs of the African fever periodically stir within him even now. As a thin skeleton of a trader who went home with us said: "I came here fourteen stone, and look at me now; it's a ghastly place."

When darkness came again we dropped anchor in the centre of a narrow creek, and the big steamer (four thousand tons she was) floated motionless with the muddy river gurgling against her bows. It was too hot to play cards in the smoking-room: the heat and the mosquitoes made sleep in our stifling, cockroach-haunted berths out of the question; and we sat on deck while the long dark hours dragged by. A damp mist

hid the surface of the creek, though the wall of sombre forest rose dim and shadowy above it, while from out of the darkness came the hoarse croaking of storks wading along the edge of the mud. At intervals an alligator splashed noisily among the mangrove roots, or a leopard howled somewhere afar off on firmer ground; then there would be silence for a space, and half choked with heat and the foul emanations of the swamps we longed for the cool air of dawn.

With the first of the daylight we were off again, steaming six knots an hour towards Benin, through what must surely be one of the strangest countries on earth. The dingy foliage of the mangroves spread far out across the winding creek, brushing the steamer's side as she passed, while beneath the arched roots, which resembled the tentacles of a crawling octopus, were fathomless depths of foul slime or banks of festering mud, alive with loathsome scaly things that swam or crawled. Water, mud, and trees everywhere, and nothing else. Then at intervals we steamed by strips of firm earth, where lordly cottonwoods and feathery oil-palms broke the monotony of the mangroves. Trailing plants of many hues hung in festoons from the massive branches, and the ground beneath their feet was carpeted with clusters of the fragrant African lilies, whose flowers only unfold at night, among which could be seen the crimson-spiked leaves of the pineapple. Here the tropical forest was royally beautiful; but it was a deceitful beauty, for death or sickness lurked in every breath of its scented air, and the germs of fever mingled with the odours of many spices.

Beyond a few flocks of frightened parrots, or an occasional alligator, neither beast, nor bird, nor reptile was visible, for the wild creatures of the African forest invariably lie fast

in their lairs by day, and only seek their prey at night. Of men, however, there were plenty. Canoe after canoe passed us, varying from forty feet to ten in length. The former are unwieldy craft, hollowed out of a single cottonwood log, and loaded down to the last inch with greasy kernels or palm-oil. In the bows a number of naked slaves, frequently women, plied the quaintly carved Benin paddles. The word slaves is used advisedly, for although this is British territory, domestic slavery is everywhere common. Parents freely sell their children, and it would be interesting to know how many wives some of the white traders have purchased at £5 a head. The waist of the craft is piled high with cargo, and under an awning aft the headman-trader lies in state. He generally affects a striped flannel jacket and battered silk hat, when he looks grotesque; but occasionally he appears in his native nudity, and then he is statuesque and antique. Let any athlete or anatomist view one of these Niger-men, and he will confess that it would be hard to find a finer specimen of physical humanity. Of his mental capacity, however, so much cannot be said, though white traders have discovered that to take the bushman in is not so easy as it seems. Almost invariably a guard of half a dozen big warriors, armed with sharp matchets and flintlock guns, occupy the stern, where two women crouch around a fire preparing some glutinous mess of food.

The arms are for use, not display. Every petty chief, who possesses a village bordering on a trade-river, levies a heavy toll on all canoes passing through his dominions. This is winked at; but occasionally, if there are few Yoruba troops in the locality, or the nearest official of the Niger Coast Protectorate is down with fever,

it happens that the canoes which enter that creek never come out at all, and the incoming boats meet mutilated corpses drifting down towards Forcados bar. When this happens, if the officer recovers (which is not always the case), a notice is sent to the offender that he is fined much oil. Sometimes he pays the fine and reforms, and sometimes he sends back an insulting message, defying the Queen's men to reach him. Then a score of Yorubas and an armed launch are sent up; the town is burned, and for a time peace ensues. Then the trouble begins again, and so the weary round goes on.

Many of the canoes, however, were smaller, and as they scuttled away among the mangroves at the steamer's approach, we caught sight of the unmistakable green gin-cases. The crews were probably smugglers, engaged in the profitable business of running poisonous potato spirit, which costs about twopence-halfpenny the quart in Hamburg, from the territory of the Protectorate into the domains of the Royal Niger Company where the duty is higher. It is a profitable but hazardous undertaking, for the armed launches of the Company patrol the creeks, and very ready justice is meted out on the Niger. The officials of the great Corporation which rules many thousands of negroes are very reticent, but shots are frequently heard, and the natives say they are fired on first and questioned afterwards, if there is anything suspicious about them. It is not wise to place much credence in rumours, especially in Africa, but there are stories told of several dark tragedies in the creeks where innocent men have been shot on sight.

Some of the lighter craft were paddled by women only, and here, as in other uncivilised parts of the world, the writer noticed that whereas the men, with the exception of their faces,

were fine specimens of humanity, the women could only be described as repulsive. It is so with most savage races, though there are women of the Gold Coast Fantis, in whose veins some of the blood of the old Dutch settlers still runs, who are almost handsome. As a rule they carried a woolly-haired infant slung behind their shoulders in a strip of palm-net; why they do not lay them down does not appear, and it may be remarked that the writer never heard an African baby cry. One and all the canoes carried palm-oil, and as this is the staple trade of the Niger mouths, and the inducement which leads many white men to enter this fever-haunted region, a brief description is perhaps permissible. The palm-nuts grow in rows beneath the main rib of the feathery fronds. In appearance and size they are not unlike a yellow plum with a dash of crimson on one side. Beneath a thin skin lies a layer of yellow grease mingled with fibre, which is scraped off by the natives, and when the fibre has been picked out it is packed in calabashes for sale to the factories. There is no other preparation, and an immense quantity of the fragrant sticky paste is shipped to Liverpool, and there are many processes of manufacture in which its use is indispensable. A hard nut remains, which is cracked and the inside kernel, a little oily thing about the size of a hazel-nut, is also shipped in vast quantities to Great Britain, Hamburg, and Antwerp, where a thinner oil is pressed out, though the outer layer is the best.

However, all this brings us no nearer Benin. It was again afternoon when we passed a large native village. The aromatic odour of burning wood warned us of its vicinity, and presently we caught sight of the many rows of huts composed of sun-

dried mud and thatched with palm leaves nestling beneath a semi-circle of stately trees. On the outskirts the pale green of the banana leaves contrasted sharply with the dark foliage of oranges and limes, and the scent of the white blossoms was heavy in the air. A bare stretch of sun-scorched, hard trodden earth lay in front of the huts, the palaver-square, in the centre of which stood the sacred Ju-Ju tree.

Now there are endless devils known to the West African, of whom Amalaku, the water-spirit, is the chief; and it is remarkable that along three thousand miles of coast, from Gambia to Congo, although the races and languages differ widely from one another, every negro trembles before the power of the Ju-Ju. The Fetish priests may be an evil lot, and they are certainly expert poisoners, but men whom the fever has spared to live long in the land say that they are by no means altogether ignorant impostors. The craft is handed down from father to son, and a Feddah, or Ju-Ju man, is set apart at a very early age and carefully trained in the knowledge of every herb which may be used to kill or cure (most often the former) and in occult lore. It is certain that they can do things which an ordinary European can find no explanation of, and the true Feddah is cosmopolitan. He may travel into the lands of a race knowing not his language, and no man dare disobey his will. There are many curious tales, and some ghastly ones, told about them on the Oil Rivers which may, or may not, be true; but white men who have been long in Africa do not care to provoke the Feddah unadvisedly. It is certain they can administer poison so skilfully that its presence cannot be detected by analysis, and yet the victim slowly dies. The writer once travelled home with two officers from Lagos, both very

ill, and a clever surgeon of the Gold Coast Government said: "I cannot diagnose this case; I feel sure they have been poisoned, and yet I can find absolutely no trace of it."

The village once passed we steamed out upon a wide, lake-like reach of water, and the white factories of Benin rose to view. Opposite us lay the road cut through the forest when Bluejackets and Marines, aided by the Yoruba soldiers of the Niger Protectorate, destroyed the stockade of the river-pirate Nana, who, thinking himself secure among the quaking swamps, mocked the Government and blocked the trade-routes. The road is marked by a belt of smaller timber.

Half an hour later the Loanda was moored to a shaking wharf at the leading factory. If there is a more dismal spot than New Benin it must be very hard to find. A foul swamp borders the river for miles, and on this enough sand, brought from the distant bar in canoes, has been piled to permit of the erection of the trader's houses and oil-sheds. In front lies the turbid river, and behind a desolation of mangroves rising out of festering mud, breeding fever and sudden death. The factories lie half a mile apart, and in each two or three sickly white men pass the dreariest of lives. There is barely sufficient sand about them to hold the Agent's house, oil and salt sheds, and beyond the piles which bind the whole together lies the oozy swamp. The place is infested with burrowing crabs, which undermine the ground to such an extent that canoes are continually carrying sand to repair their ravages. The trader's work begins early. At six he is up and about, to start the brawny Accra coopers at work upon the oil-barrels. Afterwards the store is opened, and a swarm of negro dealers, who have brought down oil or kernels, flock in to make

their purchases. Little looking-glasses, villainous trade-powder, bottles of hair-oil and pomade (for what purpose no one knows), old silk hats, and cast-off European garments, are always in demand, and the business is carried on amid a babel of disputing voices. The larger traders, however, generally take gin or salt in return for their vouchers, and the latter article is shipped in immense quantities to the Niger. From thence it is carried in canoes and upon the heads of slave women (the favourite means of transit in West Africa) through forests in which the foot of white men has never been set, and across the hot sand beyond, until it sometimes reaches Southern Fezzan, for distance is apparently no object to the African. After leaving the factories the salt is packed in long mat cylinders, and as it passes through his dominions each sable potentate cuts off an inch, so that the quantity which reaches the final consumer is small and precious. The ways of the Soudan trade are still to a great extent unknown to white men, for the powers ruling in that wild region allow neither trader nor explorer to pass their boundaries. When darkness comes (at six o'clock all the year round) there is no possibility of any recreation for the unfortunate agents. The river lies in front, and a bottomless quagmire behind; and the evening is passed grumbling at the mosquitoes and smoking on the broad verandah. Half their time, however, they are down with fever. It may be remarked that this settlement could offer but feeble resistance to a raid, each factory being isolated. Should the King of Benin (Old Benin) lead his warriors down the river every trade-shed would be looted. However, as the Nimbi men found to their cost at Akassa, it is very hard work to anni-

hilate determined Europeans crouching behind saltbag redoubts with repeating rifles in their hands.

So much for the traders. There is, however, one Englishman at New Benin who does not trade. He is the Acting-Consul, and occupies a station on the river-bank with a handful of black soldiers, Yorubas or Egbas, from Lagos colony. The Consulate is defended by neither wall nor stockade and could only be held against a rush by personal skill and valour. The last time the writer was there he was shown a pair of splendid tusks, which had been given the British officer by way of *dash* when he paid a diplomatic visit to the King of Benin.¹ When asked to make a trading treaty that monarch replied, and the words were given the writer by one present: "I have allowed the white Queen to place four small factories at the mouth of my river; but I am always King of Benin, and the next white man who enters my creeks will be shot."

Old Benin is a city stained with blood, and a place of unmentionable Fetish cruelties. The writer has not been there, but he has been within forty miles of it, and carefully gleaned what information he could from two white traders who once entered its gates, and also from many natives. It is probable that only some half-dozen Europeans have ever been inside it. There are many extraordinary tales told about this place, but it is generally believed to contain a great wealth of ivory. The natives say that every king of Benin is compelled by the Ju-Ju priests to store so much ivory, which may not be sold, as a propitiation to the wood-devils, whose name is legion. One white trader, who had been there, assured the

¹ No bargain is concluded in West Africa, or diplomatic visits made, without the exchange of presents termed *dash*.

writer that he saw solid fences of fine ivory worth £1,400 a ton. Even allowing a large margin for imagination there is evidently much treasure in Benin. Every kind of horrible cruelty seems prevalent; human sacrifice is rife, and slaves are buried alive under the foundations of each new house. At certain seasons of the year many mutilated, and sometimes headless corpses, float down the rivers with the ebb tide; a grim hint of what goes on in the bush. Crucifixion seems to be a favourite mode of execution, only that instead of using nails the victims are lashed to the trees. But the imagination of the daily press has already supplied the public with sufficient horrors, and this side of the subject is not an attractive one.

It must be borne in mind that, while the subjects of the King of Benin are heathen and rank savages, when once his territory is passed the negroes are tinged with the semi-civilisation of the Arabs, and have a little of the northern blood in their veins. There is no difficulty in telling them at a glance from the bushmen of the coast; the one is a savage; the other is something better.

Further north again, there are great Mahomedan sultanates with walled cities and well drilled regular armies in addition to an organised trade, chiefly in slaves. It must never be forgotten that a hostile expedition ascending the Niger would not be met by savage foes, except in the coast swamps, but would have to contend with formidable powers directed by men who are half-Arab, and are the equal of the European in many things.

That, however, is not the case with

the King of Benin. He is merely a blood-thirsty savage; but the Niger Coast Protectorate may possibly find it no easy matter to bring him to order. First of all it will be necessary to send the troops up the tangled waterways of the swamps in boats, and the bushman has a simple device for hampering the passage of a flotilla. It is forbidden to sell to the negroes any fire-arm but a flint-lock gun, and yet, for all that, every headman possesses a small cast-iron cannon or two, and some even fairly heavy pieces of artillery,—how obtained the officers of Government would give much to learn. One of these is lashed to a heavy trunk and hidden among the dense foliage overhanging a narrow creek. The naked gunner practises until he can make certain of hitting a moored log every time; then the gun is wedged immovable and a wand, or some other easily concealed mark, set up on the opposite bank. When the foe is expected the bushmen crouch round the unseen gun, and the moment the flotilla lines itself between the muzzle and wand a load of nails and old glass is fired into it. This device was used with terrible success by the Brassmen against our expedition sent to punish them after the sack of Akassa, and Major Crawford, among many other casualties, was badly wounded. Another favourite device on the Oil Rivers is to moor a boom of logs across a creek, and while the crews are busy loosing the obstacle to fire a murderous volley into them from an ambush on the banks. No one doubts that the power of the tyrant will be broken; but men who know the Niger creeks appreciate the difficulties to be faced.

THACKERAY'S PHILOSOPHY.

THE question is still hotly debated whether Thackeray's genius is actually of the first order. To answer that question without the weight of authority would be absurd. Indeed it seems certain that only Time can settle it. The most cogent reasoning cannot establish a classic; that is only to be effected by an irresistible tendency of the world's thought. But it may be possible to mark the meaning of those who would deny him and those who claim for him the first place, and to discriminate in his work between the ephemeral part of it and that which retains a living interest for us, the conditions of whose life are already far removed from those under which he wrote.

Perhaps the most vital, and certainly the most striking, difference in the various estimates of Thackeray lies in the attribution or denial of the philosophic note to his thought. Some critics describe him as pre-eminently the philosopher among novelists; others accuse him of notorious superficiality, and will not allow him to have been a thinker of any kind. Can there be any common ground of fact supporting views so diametrically opposed?

No doubt the critics who describe Thackeray as a philosopher are chiefly, if not wholly, occupied with the idea of his reflection upon life. He was "driving at practice" in all he wrote. He never wrote (not even a child's fairy-story) for the mere pleasure of story-telling. His attention was constantly engaged by the moral aspect of things. And this would quite fairly establish a claim for Thackeray to be regarded as a writer

of philosophical quality, in spite of his aversion to the transcendental way of viewing things and his indifference to study, if it could be shown that he treated such subjects in a broad and noble manner. He would be a philosopher, not of the schools but of the world, gaining infinitely more in effectiveness than he lost in precision and subtlety.

Those, however, who do not admire him, object not only that he was no student, no metaphysician, a known abhorrer of the transcendental, but that he was quite incapable of rising to the conception of an idea, strictly bound down to the concrete; not the great concrete facts and forces which mould or break the world, but little, petty artificialities which exactly give his measure.

Thackeray's ultimate position is involved in the judgment which will be formed on his criticism, his direct criticism, of life. He has left work,—his highest from a purely literary point of view—where the criticism, though it is far from being unimportant, is indirect. Still *ESMOND*, in spite of its superior construction, in spite of the greater pleasure which it offers to the reader, will never be taken to represent Thackeray as he is represented by *VANITY FAIR*, by *PENDENNIS* and *THE NEWCOMES*. These books are less pleasant because they actually do represent Thackeray more completely than *ESMOND* represents him. Thackeray at his strongest produces as much pain as pleasure, because he is what Matthew Arnold would have called a dissolvent; the destructive

element predominates in his criticism.

Criticism which is wholly destructive is satire, and to this in the earlier part of his career Thackeray gave himself up entirely. When he proceeded from *THE BOOK OF SNOBS* to *VANITY FAIR* he was forced to enlarge his method. You cannot manufacture a world out of mere dissolvents, and Thackeray, starting from a merely satirical intention, was soon forced to go beyond satire and to introduce a principle of order derived from his own consciousness. He had till this time spent all his energy in proclaiming laws, the breaking of which was death; he had now to produce a gospel of his own by which men might live. It is not inevitably just to make the test of a man's work his positive conclusions. A man may be an excellent dissolvent, and quite powerless when he tries to be anything more; still it is not fair to conclude that because he can make nothing he had no right to unmake, or that he went destroying recklessly, or in the wrong direction.

Thackeray, however, would have to shrink so much in his pretensions if he were to be regarded as only a destructive force, that in sheer fairness it is necessary to take his work as a whole, and consider his satire as clearing the ground for a definite system which he had to build. Taken by itself, his satire is not difficult to estimate. That it had tact without depth seems easily proved by its obvious and speedy results. The *saeva indignatio*, the savage scorn which goes down to the very fundamental vices of human nature, makes very little impression, because it aims at an overthrow little short of universal, and is too dangerous not to excite the instinct of self-preservation to the sharpest resistance. It is in matters not of vital importance that one can be easily

effective. The obsolete can be removed before the hurtful, the superfluous before the absurd. Thackeray levelled his aim, for the most part, at mere empty husks and shells of prejudice, which had already ceased to have any significant contents for good or evil. In reading the *BOOK OF SNOBS* or the *WAYSIDE SKETCHES*, or most of his miscellaneous work, one is struck by the number of small, definite abuses which have perished since he attacked them. Very probably it was not he who killed them: he may only have expressed a general and victorious tendency; but it is noteworthy how keen and accurate his feeling was for the general tendency.

Immediate success of this kind is subject to heavy penalties. As new generations succeed, whose evils are of quite a different kind, they look with bare toleration on those who have won the battles of the past. Thackeray will have scanty gratitude for the changes which he brought about in contemporary manners, the meannesses which he sneered down, the follies which he laughed away. It is only where he was concerned with principles, with everlasting springs of action, that he will continue to have more than a historic interest. It is his weakness, his conspicuous weakness, that he is too pre-occupied with accidents, with mere matters of detail, to the neglect of principles. Still he does, at times, deal with his subject in a broad, human fashion, and he does this more often than perhaps he gets credit for.

Where he is bound to submit to us a somewhat extended view of life, as in most of his novels, it becomes plain that he has a genuine seriousness of purpose beyond the scope of the successful satirist. He is not confined, as sometimes he seems to be, to the regions where the question of hiring plate for a dinner-party becomes a

part of ethics; he is the most trenchant adversary of the materialisation of the English aristocracy and middle classes in the early years of the Victorian era. But he is much more than that. He has penetrated deeply into some of the eternal characters of human nature.

Thackeray's method and Thackeray's view of life were based on an instinct of revolt against the view of life and the method of describing it, which aims at its glorification at the expense of truth; which appeals, not to a sense of reality, but to unintelligent curiosity and to a vanity that finds a gratification in seeing human nature outrageously flattered; the method and the views which at that time had Bulwer Lytton for their most popular exponent. As he had attacked affectation and insincerity in slight affairs of etiquette and conduct, he attacked insincerity and affectation here too. He went on to examine the relations of human life, to try men's actions and motives, at first only with the object of showing how grossly they were being misrepresented, but soon with a much more serious design. The passion for truth entered into him, the desire to discover and show it in its severity without the dazzling, many-coloured hues which imagination casts upon it. He felt that the pompous and tinsel disguise which his contemporaries loved was scarcely false than the beauty lent by the fancy of poets or the enthusiasm of ardent souls to a very commonplace and prosaic world. Either fantasy, or convention, or fondness for tawdry ornament had perpetually interfered with accurate representation. He was the prophet and apostle of realism, and his realism,—very real and very intense for all its decent restraint and well-bred utterance—was a spiritual realism. He explored the dark places of the soul, and described passions

and crimes while they slept, still only germinant and potential, in the heart and the intellect. It was thus that he could introduce his realism unproved, a concealed innovator, and for this purpose the men and women whom he knew best, the men and women of the upper classes, were the most appropriate material.

But it is in his treatment of virtue, in contact with characters for whom he has an esteem, that Thackeray's analysis is most searching and most edifying. In *VANITY FAIR*, what his first audience felt most vividly was his exposure of the depraved constitution of society; the sketches of that noble profligate, the Marquis of Steyne, of Becky, that successful adventuress, of that distinguished soldier, General Tufto. It was the most scathing satire on a hopelessly materialised aristocracy, and as such it had its immediate effect. But what to-day retains any power of edification, of more than amusement, or has anything more than a historic interest, is the penetration into the weaknesses of the human heart at its best and purest, the flaws of parental love, of wifely affection, the selfishness incident to the joy of childhood, the inseparable limitations of generosity and friendship. Amelia and Dobbin and the old Sedleys and Helen Pendennis seem dull personages to many readers; they have not that quality which we call dramatic, the quality which appeals to the senses and the powers of the intellect most nearly allied to them. But how edifying! how instructive! how they open the secret workings of the heart!

Thackeray does not write as a cynic, but as a lover of sober truth, else his subtle analysis would have no value but its cleverness, his power of edification would be gone. He has not an indictment framed against the human race as he had against the

society of his time ; but he conceived of the dignity of man in another than the current fashion. He did not believe that human nature was the better for being invested with false attributes, that man was any nobler for being looked at through coloured glasses. He was prepared to grant that love is a beautiful thing, but he did not think it a blasphemous discovery that love seldom comes in the sudden, victorious manner which was universally held to be proper to it, but is heralded by false alarms, preceded by pretenders who usurp its name, and often dashed and tarnished by cold, prudential considerations. A mother's affection is even more beautiful, but it can be, for all that, unwise, irrational, unjust. Children are the world's delight, the especial favourites of heaven, yet experience teaches us that they can be selfish, callous to kindness, exacting, untruthful.

What is the end of this curious considering? It has for its end the discovery of something true, stable, unassailable, something in human nature to rest upon with conviction. Thackeray could not rest upon a transfigured humanity; he was too clear-sighted, and of too solid a temperament to assent to an imaginative re-construction of the world. He laboured with his unceasing rigid realism to strip off the delusive externals which were so satisfactory to most of his fellows, that he might be able to rest at last, assured that he was not placing his confidence in a painted virtue.

His natural bent was to seek the satisfaction of his nature less in the intellectual than in the moral and emotional. He had no fondness for abstract thinking, and was not in sympathy with what was being achieved in that direction in his own time. He distrusted thought which was elevated above the sphere of

action, seeing clearly that lofty thinking often went with very ignoble deeds. His life had been such, it may safely be said that his temperament, in any case, was such, that he could not live in imagination, protected against the jars and pains of life. Religion would have been his natural refuge, and he felt himself alternately drawn to it by instinct and repelled by the clear vision which told him that it was not the right harbour for such a mind as his.

The unrest produced by this alternate attraction and repulsion deepened his natural melancholy. It gave him a feeling of being at war with his better self, and he has expressed something of his agitation in the picture which he gives of Arthur Pendennis's attitude, Pendennis being to a considerable degree a revelation of his own mind.

To what does this easy and sceptical life lead a man?

Friend Arthur was a Sadducee, and the Baptist might be in the wilderness shouting to the poor, who were listening with all their might and faith to the preacher's awful accents and denunciations of wrath or woe or salvation; and our friend the Sadducee would turn his sleek mule with a shrug and a smile from the crowd, and go home to the shade of his terrace, and muse over preacher and audience, and turn to his roll of Plato, or his pleasant Greek song-book babbling of honey and Hybla, and nymphs and fountains and love. To what, we say, does this scepticism lead? It leads a man to a shameful loneliness and selfishness, so to speak—the more shameful because it is so good-humoured and conscienceless and serene. Conscience! What is conscience? Why accept remorse? What is public or private faith? Mythuses alike enveloped in enormous tradition. If, seeing and acknowledging the lies of the world, Arthur, as see them you can with only too fatal a clearness, you submit to them without any protest further than a laugh; if, plunged yourself in easy sensuality, you allow the whole wretched world to pass groaning by you unmoved: if the fight for the truth is taking place, and all men of honour are on the ground armed on the one side or the other, and

you alone are to lie on your balcony and smoke your pipe out of the noise and the danger, you had better have died, or never have been at all, than such a sensual coward.

The case is brutally overstated, and Thackeray must have been conscious that it was so. This was only a momentary outburst. Still, he felt a continual uneasiness at having to stand aloof from all the causes into which other men could throw their entire souls. He regretted that he could not fight for a half-truth as if it were the whole, and blamed himself for his inability. Religion, too, only expressed half the truth of man's life for him. What then remained to which he could attach himself? There remained a certain fundamental goodness in man in which he could believe and which he regarded as the clue to conduct. Not to pitch one's standard too high, not to live out of the world in a sphere of abstract thought or imagination or mysticism, not to put one's trust in lofty qualities, which have their rise perhaps only in imagination or ignorance, to the neglect of plain, hard matters of fact and duty, but to recognise, believe in, and cultivate the virtues of humility and kindness—that was the secret which Thackeray believed would carry one safely through the world. He did not flatter himself that it was a newly-discovered secret, or promising to bear very wide results, or even capable of affording a vividly triumphant issue to those who practised it, but he believed that it was true when tested, and safe when put into effect.

It is in those novels which reflect most directly on life that one naturally looks to find Thackeray, but it is in one devoted to dramatic presentment

that the crown and proof of his system is to be found. The discovery and the application of it is elsewhere, in the novels which will be held to represent Thackeray most precisely, *VANITY FAIR*, *PENDENNIS*, *THE NEWCOMES*; but it is Henry Esmond who is introduced to us as actually holding Thackeray's secret. Esmond is endowed with all the accomplishments of a man, and holds them so lightly that they seem to make no difference to him. He moves in the society of the greatest men of a great age, and all he finds worth recording is that Dr. Swift was insolent and St. John a drunkard. He is more clear-sighted than any man of his time, and he attempts to give his country a bad king, in defiance of his principles and to the ruin of his hopes. Yet he is the best man Thackeray has given us; perhaps the best man we have known. And the springs of his goodness are that he is humble before what he can understand of goodness, and true to the motions of his heart in gratitude and affection.

Perhaps Thackeray's analysis was more important than his results. Perhaps his secret was neither new nor very effectual. But he first taught men to know their hearts, where they had only seen their actions. He held the mirror up to nature in a way that was very surprising to it, and while his caricatures of society have lost their first interest, his delineation of the motions of the heart can never lose its significance. Indeed it may yet take on a new and surprising significance as literature strays farther and farther from the path which he indicated for it, into the labyrinth of mental pathology.

THE STORY OF CRESSIDA.

IN the introduction to *THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS*, Chaucer describes himself as waking up in a strange room with pictured walls and windows of stained glass wrought with the story of Troy. We can imagine such a window in the fourteenth century; Troy Town with its girdling towers, Troilus and Hector in coats of mail, Helen and Lavinia in kirtles and caps that Queen Philippa might have worn. For if the tale of Troy had taken possession of the medieval imagination, it had been refashioned to suit medieval experience and ideas. The Middle Ages, says a French critic, were like children who can never hear too many stories. And as each set of children will colour the tales they hear with phrases and circumstances drawn from their own lives, so did the Middle Ages repeat the same tales to successive generations in every language of Europe, everywhere colouring them with the habits and ideas of the age and country in which they were retold.

The men of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, like the children or peasants of every age, habitually recognised but two dates, *to-day* and *long ago*. The latter was a period of infinite expansiveness in whose misty recesses the doings of immediate progenitors were on the same plane as the glory of the Cæsars or the feats of David and Gideon. From that abyss of time one event seems to have loomed upon the medieval mind with peculiar distinctness, the Siege of Troy. By a curious delusion all the nations of medieval Europe claimed an ancestral interest in that far-off event. Virgil, not

Homer, was for the first fourteen centuries of our era the exponent of antiquity, and Virgil had for ever given authority to the belief of the Roman people in their descent from the royal House of Troy. When Rome in her decay and death fascinated and awed the imagination of her barbarian conquerors, these parvenus of glory, eager to cover their nakedness with rags of her imperial purple, found no method less capable of disproof than to claim common descent from the Princes of Troy. As early as the seventh century a Frankish clerk with some confused scraps of learning claimed for his people direct descent from Francus, son of Priam, a pedigree which soon came to be matter of national faith. Antenor was the ancestor chosen by the Normans when they, in their turn growing conscious of a national destiny, desired to connect their history with the imperial past; while the ancient and self-glorious peoples of Wales and Brittany traced with peculiar circumstantiality their descent from Brut, son of Silvius and grandson of Æneas and Lavinia.

These claims have curiously coloured the medieval Tale of Troy. In all the numerous versions the Greeks play a sorry part; even Achilles triumphs through a mixture of cunning and ferocity, while Hector is the ideal knight, prudent and courteous as he is in valour pre-eminent.

Up to the end of the twelfth century, though the name of Troy was familiar in men's minds, their knowledge of the siege was scanty. Homer was unread; even Virgil,

though he lived in popular imagination as a great magician, was the property of the learned few. The main authorities for the tale, as it was then known, were two writers of the latest and worst period of Latin literature, who, under the names of Dares and Dictys, professed to describe the siege as eye-witnesses. These forgeries, miserable and arid epitomes, were received by the uncritical Middle Ages as trustworthy records of contemporaries, while Homer was discredited as a glorious but untruthful clerk. From such scanty materials was constructed that Tale of Troy which four centuries were to read with delight and to revere as the beginning of authentic history.

The real author of this extraordinary work was Benoît de Sainte-More, a Norman troubadour of the twelfth century. Of his life we know nothing: his learning would argue him a clerk; his zest for fighting would prove him not unacquainted with arms; his knowledge of courts and camps and cities indicate that he was a man of the world. Benoît, indeed, professes to follow his author closely, but admits to have added certain passages, *bons dits*, as he calls them. Among these happy inventions which give life and grace to his endless chronicles of combats and truces, is one so bright, so original, so full of natural life that later authors detached it from the context, dressed it in varying circumstance and sentiment, and made of it one of the typical love-stories of the Middle Ages, the tale of Troilus and Cressida. No later poet has essentially altered the story; none has excelled Benoît in dramatic interest; only Chaucer has equalled him in freshness and purity of treatment.

It was impossible that a French poem of the twelfth century should lack the element of love, though in

the north of France love was not yet exalted into an art as it was in the south. Fighting, and not love-making nor song-writing, was the occupation of Norman knights, though love and music might fill their leisure hours. There is a terrible reality about the part played by women in the daily life of that town of Troy which Benoît describes so vividly. When the heroes in true medieval fashion ride out to fight beneath the walls, the ladies look down from windows and balconies with breathless interest. Desperate issues hang for them on the combat; their lives, their freedom, their honour are at stake. When the warriors return, princesses, noble damsels, and rich maidens unarm the weary and nurse the wounded. When Hector falls, the streets resound with their loud cries. They are impotent to influence their men in any serious business; even Hector, who never spoke despitely to any one, turns savagely on Andromache when she would keep him from the field. Living thus in constant fear, in submission, and in the performance of humble services, there is a pathos about these medieval women. Polyxena, Benoît's ideal of a high-born damsel, meets her doom with pathetic patience. In startling contrast to the tragic figures of Hector's wife and sister is the Breseida whose portrait Benoît draws with so much life and with a satiric but not unkindly humour. She is the natural woman, the eternal type common alike to courts and cottages, and everywhere born to be the delight and distraction of all youthful males within her reach. Beautiful, quick-witted, the victim of sympathies that outrun her sincerity and betray her good faith, Breseida can grieve over the wreck of her lover's happiness, even while she secures her own by the elasticity and facile affectionateness of her nature. This blithe creature of little stability and great attraction is thus

described in the old French poem: "Breseida was courteous; she was neither too little nor too tall. She was fairer and whiter and lovelier than lily-flower or snow upon the branch; only the eyebrows meeting marred the perfection of her face. She had beautiful wide open eyes, and her speech was quick and witty. She was well beloved, and loved much in return, but her heart was fickle." Breseida appears on the scene at the moment when her father Calchas, the renegade Trojan priest, has persuaded the Greeks to exchange their prisoner Antenor for the daughter whom he has left behind in Troy. We have here no word of that long wooing by Troilus which forms the chief interest of later versions; in Benoît's poem Breseida is simply Troilus's sweetheart, an accepted and not too prominent fact in the life of that splendid young warrior. Bitter is the lamentation of the lovers when they know that they must part; full of forebodings and sad farewells is the last night they spend together, yet even at this heart-breaking moment Breseida is concerned to pack up all her gowns and other possessions. It is a satiric touch that male authors in all ages are fond of repeating, but very few have the secret sympathy with love of splendour which made Benoît devote seventy lines to the description of a cloak, which had been marvellously wrought by necromancy in the land of Ind.

Despite the consoling and upholding consciousness of finery Breseida cannot restrain her cries when the Trojan ladies take a tearful farewell of her; when at the barriers of the Greek camp, she says good-bye to Troilus, she nearly dies of grief. But Benoît wastes no serious sympathy on the despair of his heroine; in four days, he assures us, her humour will be so completely changed that she

will have no longer any desire to return to Troy. "All women are alike," adds this sweeping satirist; "with one eye they weep, and already are smiling with the other." Breseida is indeed to find absorbing interests in the Grecian camp. Hardly is Troilus out of sight than Diomedes, into whose charge she has been delivered, begins to look on her with a soldier's eye, and immediately, with all the insolent frankness of a man-at-arms, makes an avowal of his admiration and desire to be her friend. For all his boldness love will in a short time completely subdue that simple heart and rob him of sleep, of speech, and self-possession. Diomedes is in fact a medieval Rawdon Crawley, as brave, as vacant, and as infatuated as was that honest gentleman. With animated but quite unnecessary explicitness Breseida declines his overtures for the time; she abashes her rash suitor with a great show of maidenly prudence, piques him by detailing the worth and devotion of the lover she has quitted, but, not to appear too discouraging, assures him that were she free no one would deserve her favour more than he. Before they reach her father's tent Diomedes has possessed himself of her glove, whereat, we read, she was in nowise displeased.

This policy of alternately tormenting and cajoling her big, simple-minded suitor, Breseida pursues with animation to the exclusion of all other thoughts or regrets; "she had such quick understanding, that she clearly perceived that he loved her beyond aught else in the world, wherefore she showed herself all the prouder to him." "This is always the way with ladies," adds Benoît, who dearly loves a flout at womenkind. If Breseida remembers Troilus at all, it is only to twit her new lover with praise of his valour and worth. When, however, she has

almost distracted Diomedé by her taunts, softening suddenly she bestows on him her favour, a scarlet sleeve fatally familiar to Troilus. Faithless and vain as she is, Breseida is not like some of her descendants, altogether heartless. When Diomedé is carried dangerously wounded from the field she flings off all pretence, defies calumnious tongues, and hastens to nurse him in his tent. But even when she follows the impulse of her heart, she stops to analyse her own feelings with the subtlety and self-consciousness of a modern heroine. "Alas!" she reflects, "henceforth no good will ever be said of me;" but while she bewails her faithlessness, she finds excuse for it; in her isolation she sorely needed distraction from sad thoughts. With the comfortable practicalness which is the true nurse of sentimentality, she deplores her spiritual short-comings from the vantage-ground of material gain; after all she has the best of the game. Finally, with cheerful good sense, she prays God to bless Troilus, and resolves henceforward to be true to his rival.

There is far more of the natural man in Benoit's Troilus than in the patient, heart-broken lover of later and subtler poets. In his jealous rage the Norman Troilus singles Diomedé out in the fight, strikes him down and, after bidding him carry his wounds to the daughter of Calchas, adds this bitter warning: "You stand where I stood once. Now we are two; before the end of the siege there will be more." With mockery on his tongue and a heart henceforth hardened against all women, Troilus shuts out the memory of Breseida.

Benoit's Tale of Troy was prodigiously successful, as success went in those days; the author's name was ignored while his poem was freely pillaged and plagiarised, translated

into every tongue in Europe, turned into prose and then back again into verse. The most noticeable of these unacknowledged thefts was a Latin translation made in the thirteenth century by Guido delle Colonne of Messina. This version is important, because it was probably in this form that the story of Troilus and Cressida passed into the hands of the most famous story-teller the western world has known. Boccaccio himself tells us what reasons led him to choose the loves and sorrows of Troilus as the subject of his early poem, *PHILOSTRATO*. It was written at the Court of Naples, when he was a young man of eight-and-twenty, and already deeply enamoured of the lady he has celebrated under the name of Fiammetta. It was during the absence of this lady that the poet, to still the restless longings of his heart, searched through old stories to discover some other lover as hapless as himself, and found no case so apt as that of the deserted Prince of Troy. To suit this purpose, the whole story had to be refashioned.

Love was in his age and country the one theme of poetry. Though this love is elevated into a kind of worship, it is no longer spiritualised as in the early writings of Dante; in Boccaccio it is frankly and passionately sensuous. Troilus is no warrior, but a lover; nights of tears and sighs, raptures of hope and passionate regret, replace the call to arms and the stern joy of the fight. The din of battle sounds faintly in Boccaccio's poem; we are no longer in a besieged city, but in the pleasant town of Naples, and in the sweetest season of the year, when painted flowers and young fresh grass colour the fields. Greseida, too, has changed not only her name, but her condition. Fiammetta was a married woman; hence to heighten the likeness Greseida is described as a

widow and a lady of high estate. She does not gain by the change. Beautiful and noble as is the appearance Boccaccio lends her, drawing obviously from memory, she has as little real distinction as Benoit's Breseida, and far less vitality. She yields with slavish facility to Troilo's vicarious wooing. She is not carried away like the French Breseida by vanity and too eager sympathy, still less by the finer stirrings of heart and imagination that moved the English Cressida; love with this southern nature is a matter of the senses, voluptuous, not passionate. She nearly dies of grief at parting with Troilo; but not for one instant will she listen to his appeal to defy the world, and make a bold stroke with him for happiness. That such a Greseida should, in her first discourse with Diomedes, make sentimental capital out of her widowhood is perhaps not out of character, but it is surely an incredibly coarse touch to represent her as, a few days later, joining Diomedes in deriding Troilo.

If the bulk of the *PHILOSTRATO* has a voluptuous monotony which even the flow of the limpid Italian verse cannot redeem from languor, there is both freshness and poignancy in the passages where Boccaccio is evidently retracing his own fond memories. It was in a church of nuns that he first saw Maria, the beautiful natural daughter of Robert, King of Naples, who became the lady of his song; it was in the Temple of Diana that Troilo first saw Greseida. He had entered with a troop of noble youths, carelessness in his heart, and laughter on his lips. Suddenly his roving eye is caught by a tall figure standing, gentle and proud, withdrawn from the throng. The lady wears a white veil on her head, and with her right arm clasps her long black mantle on her left shoulder in the noble attitude

so dear to sculpture. The pride of the gesture arrests Troilo; then the delicate beauty of the face, the shining eyes that deigned no glance at any one, so work on his imagination that he leaves the Temple "another man than he who entered it."

The verses in which Boccaccio describes his own feelings, under the guise of Troilo's sufferings in Greseida's absence, have something of the poignancy and tender ingenuity of phrase which mark the Elizabethan sonneteers. To shorten the hours of her absence Pandaro, his friend, has persuaded Troilo to take part in a festival at the house of Sarpedon. Sitting silent at the feast, he sees nothing but her image engraved on his own heart. "The sight of other fair and noble ladies was painful to him; nor could any solace nor sweet song afford him aught but weariness, since he could no longer see her in whose hands Love had placed the keys of his woeful life." It is the mood that all lovers know, that many poets have tried to express, the mood that finds most perfect utterance in the lines of Burns:

Though this was fair and that was braw,
And yon the toast o' a' the town,
I sighed and said among them a',
Ye are na Mary Morrison.

If the men and women about him are to Troilo but as shadows on the wall, shadows and memories alone have life and meet him at every turn. Passing her deserted house, the sight of closed doors and windows presses his heart together with pain and blanches his cheek. "There," he says, pointing out a spot to Pandaro, "once as she spoke to me I saw her smile; here she stood waiting for me once as I passed by, and there she graciously saluted me. Here I have seen her joyful, there full of sadness, and here I first knew that she had pity on my love." Only the winds that blow

from the quarter where she lives bring him refreshment; the whole world is a blank except the hills which lie round the jealous place that keeps her hidden; he envies the waters of the Scamander which, passing through the Greek camp, may mirror her beauty and embrace her feet.

Perhaps we have had excess of love in PHILOSTRATO. Probably Chaucer thought so, when he undertook to turn the story into English. Though love was to him a craft so sharp and hard that life seemed all too short to learn it perfectly, yet even love could not shut out from his interest the beauty of this delightful world, the trafficking and gossiping of ordinary men and women, the pomp of war, the pleasantness of fair ladies, the humours and absurdities of human life. He has incorporated most of Boccaccio's poem into his own longer and more dramatic work, and oddly enough do some of the most love-sick passages appear in the cheerful and delicate setting of the English story. Then, as now, the fashion of courtship was franker and freer in England than in other countries. Chaucer's story of Troilus and Cressida is as full as any modern novel of incident, conversations, chance meetings, lively descriptions of character and delicate analysis of feeling. Helen gives a feast, gay and sumptuous, such as Pinturicchio loved to paint; Cressida receives visits from the Trojan ladies and gossips about the siege; with her maidens she plays and dances under the blossoming boughs of her garden, or improves the time reading aloud the Romance of Thebes in twelve volumes.

Boccaccio had already enriched the tale with a character of which Benoit had not dreamed. A confidant was as necessary to an Italian lover as a lady-love. Pandaro, who plays this part to Troilo, is himself a hopeless lover and a fantastically devoted

friend, while his attitude towards women generally is almost brutal in its cynicism. Such a character was too un-English to find favour with Chaucer. He starts, indeed, by following his author closely, but the character of Pandaro changes rapidly in his hands. He becomes elderly; proverbs and saws adorn his conversation; the friend and lover entirely disappear in the humourist and busy-body. Equivocal as is the part both are made to play, the sly, kindly, unprincipled old uncle of Chaucer is far less repulsive than the chivalrous profligate whom Boccaccio describes as cousin to Cressida. This English Pandarus lives in a world of agreeable intrigue. It is he who induces Helen to ask Cressida to dinner; he takes advantage of the rainy aspect of the heavens to invite Cressida to supper, knowing that stress of weather will compel her to prolong her visit; he holds her in conversation near the window when he knows that Troilus may pass by. It needs, however, more than his skill to capture the maidenly fancy of this English Cressida. She is not won easily, as were her predecessors. She is a gentlewoman with dignities, reserves, and sensibilities unknown to Breseida, that brilliant child of nature, unfelt by Greseida who has never quite lost the servile instincts bequeathed from her far-off Homeric ancestress. Impulses from sounds and sights, hours of dreamy reflection, sympathetic emotion caught from another, all had to quicken the imagination of Cressida before she felt the stirrings of love. Fate, as well as Pandarus, is working for Troilus. Even as she sits alone at her lattice, moved and almost aghast by all that her uncle has told her of the passion she has excited, a cry arises without that Troilus, straight from the victorious field, is riding down the street.

We have various portraits of Troilus. In a spirited passage Benoit describes his long throat, square chin, crisp locks, broad shoulders, and active powerful limbs; it is the picture of a young warrior gauged by another fighting man. In PHILOSTRATO we have a glimpse of Troilo on horseback, hawk on wrist that recalls the slender, oval-faced, richly clad youths that accompany fair, worldly women on Orcagna's frescoes. The Troilus, whom Cressida watched secretly from her window, is the ideal of a young knight as seen through ladies' eyes.

So fresh, so young, so wieldy seemed he,
It was a heaven upon him for to see.

With this image in her eyes and Pandar's words in her ears, Cressida went out to walk with her ladies in the garden. There one of them, the bright Antigone, takes up the theme, and sings of love out of the gladness of her own full heart. Her song is of the love of women frankly and proudly yielded up to man, and every word sinks into the heart of listening Cressida. Then nature herself takes up the plea and works for Troilus.

A nightingale, upon a cedar green,
Under the chamber wall there as she lay,
Full loudly sung against the moon's sheen
Peradventure in his bird's wise a lay
Of love which made her heart's fresh
and gay,
That hearkened she so long in good
intent,
Till at the last a dead'sleep her hent.

While Cressida's character varies with every poet who has described her, in the main features Troilus remains the same in all, true, simple, brave, and kind. In Benoit he is essentially a warrior, after Hector the strong defence of Troy; in Boccaccio his courage is sicklied over by the love-malady of his age and country; in Chaucer he is the typical young Englishman at his best, modest, manly and affectionate.

In the brief season of happiness between the sweet, tormenting uncertainty of courtship and the blank despair of loss, he behaves with such prudence and gentleness,

That well she felt he was to her a wall
Of steel, and shield from every displeasure.

The tale needs but a happy ending to be one of the most charming love-stories in the language.

Every one with a tale to tell is apt to be hampered by a foregone conclusion, and it is so with Chaucer. Benoit makes his heroine's faithlessness the point of his story, and her character is quite consistent; Boccaccio concentrates his attention on Troilo, and Greseida's treachery is sketched in slightly and coarsely; Chaucer cannot so easily part with his heroine. It is noticeable that in this part of his poem he takes his incidents more directly from the old French poem. His Cressida, like her medieval ancestress, realises plaintively that henceforth unto the world's end no man will speak well of her. But if she stands self-judged before the tribunal of Time, Chaucer will add no syllable to her condemnation.

Nor me ne list this silly woman chide
Further than the story will devise.

For she so sorry was for her untruth
I wis I would excuse her yet for ruth.

Though Chaucer could not find it in his heart to condemn this fair, frail creature of his own invention she was to fall into more rigorous hands than his.

In the years when the Chaucerian tradition had become worn and languid in England, in Scotland it was full of original life and beauty. None of his English followers have caught the music of the master's verse so perfectly as James the First; Dunbar alone approaches him in the humour and originality of his pictures from

life; it was a third Scottish poet, Robert Henryson, who had the temerity to continue the tale of Cressida.

Winter and the special comforts of winter, the storm without, the heaped-up fire within, the furred gown, the modest cup to comfort the spirits, the old books to shorten the winter night, all these have been a constant theme of Scottish poets from Gavin Douglas at Saint Andrews to Walter Scott at Ashiestiel. It was under such cheerful conditions that Henryson, reading the old tale late into the night, became dissatisfied with Chaucer's indulgence to his heroine and determined to give the story a more sternly retributive close. He has succeeded in making one of the most pathetic situations in literature. When death overtakes the young and fair and proud it melts the heart with pity and ruth; but when, not death, but some dark taint in the blood suddenly wrecks beauty and gentle nurture and the pride of life, reducing them below the coarseness of the common lot, the heart sickens and the mind recoils with shuddering pity.

In many towns of Scotland in the fifteenth century might have been found a lazar-house, silent and shunned, set apart for those afflicted with the awful curse of leprosy; on all roads they might be seen begging, fearful figures in long mantles and beaver hats, with cup and clapper. To this last humiliation of the flesh does Henryson reduce Chaucer's bright, delicate lady.

Lying alone in a dark corner of the lazar-house, sleepless, loathing food, seeking no comfort, Cressida thus bemoans her state:

Where is thy garden with the branches gay,

Where thou wast wont full merrily in May

To walk and take the dew ere it was day,
And hear the merle and mavis, many a one,

With ladies fair in carolling to go
And see the royal folk in their array
In garments gay garnished on every grane?

This leper-lodge take for thy pleasant bower,

And for thy bed take now a bunch of straw.

For chosen wine and meats which thou hadst then

Take mouldy bread, perry and cider sour.
Save cup and clapper all is now agone.

With the dreadful common-sense born of long acquaintance with misery a sister in misfortune counsels her to make a virtue of her need:

To learn to clap thy clapper to and fro
And live after the law of leper-folk.

With that woeful crew Cresseid goes forth next day to clamour for alms to every passer-by. As she sits by the way-side a company of young knights ride by towards Troy. One of them draws up beside her for an instant, but disease has so dimmed her sight that though she casts her eyes on him she fails to recognise Troilus. He, looking down on the poor seamed face, sees no trait of Cressida, and yet some strange, swift memory of his lost lady drives all the blood back to his heart.

Yet then her look into his mind it brought

The sweet visage and amorous blenking¹
Of fair Cresseid sometime his own darling.

He drops his purse into the leper's lap, and rides away without a word; while round the poor lady flock her ghastly associates clamorous to share the spoil. But after all the poet is less relentless than nature. When Cresseid learns the name of the knight who has done them this charity, her heart breaks, and death, swift and

¹ Glances.

merciful, covers her disgrace in darkness. Only the epitaph on her tomb cries for pity.

Lo, fair ladies, Cresseid of Troy Town,
Sometime counted the flower of woman-
hood,

Beneath this stone, late leper, lieth dead.

This austere and touching conclusion remained a beautiful digression in the history of the tale of Cressida. It was indeed printed along with Chaucer's poem, but does not seem to have affected the popular form in which the story was known. Shakespeare may have read Lydgate's *TALE OF TROY*, but it was almost certainly Chaucer's poem that provided him with the motive of what is one of the most intellectual as it is one of the most puzzling of his plays.

It is most improbable that Shakespeare knew the old French poem, but by the intuition of genius he has restored the story to the dramatic consistency from which it was wrested by the sentiment of Boccaccio and Chaucer. In his play, as in Benoit's poem, the loves of Troilus and Cressida are but an incident in the larger drama of the doom of Troy. This later Troilus in his resentment is more akin to the first Troilus than either the wan lover of Boccaccio or the sweet-blooded young knight of Chaucer. When he receives her letter from the Grecian camp he tears it in fragments;

Words, words, mere words, no matter
from the heart ;

Go, wind, to wind, there turn and change
together.

But if the original Breseida is more akin to Shakespeare's heroine than either of the intervening ladies, it is only in the same way as the vanity and fickleness of a village beauty may be said to resemble the deep dissimulation, the splendid sensuousness, and

the keen wits of some corrupt and brilliant woman of the world. Shakespeare's Cressida is drawn with the stinging perspicacity of experience and disillusionment. Early in the play she gives the key to her own character when, in reply to her uncle's perplexed exclamation, "One knows not at what ward you lie," she answers, "Upon my wit to defend my wiles, upon my secrecy to defend mine honesty." And this creature of infinite resource is beloved by one who justly describes himself

As true as truth's simplicity
And simpler than the infancy of truth.

At the very time he complains of it, she, with clear intellectual grasp and deliberation, is calculating the effect of her reserve. Though throughout she acts with that composure which gives a woman who only plays at love such an advantage over the man who is overmastered by it, she can at will abandon herself to the passionate emotion of the hour. In the love-scene in the orchard she deludes and fascinates author and reader as well as lover; she even deceives herself. She is in turn reserved and innocently frank. With a seeming sudden impulse she confesses how she was won at the first glance, how maiden dignity alone kept her aloof; then, half fearful, half confident, she falters, bids him stop her mouth lest in her rapture she speak what she shall repent; and when her lover does so in the one obvious way she is overcome with maiden shame. She is no vulgar player, parsimoniously acting only when she would deceive another; she employs her finest eloquence to deceive herself. Only Pandarus is present when she learns that fate is hurrying her from Troy and Troilus. It is not to impress that corrupt and despicable servant of her pleasures,

but to delude her own heart, that she declares with all the energy of real passion :

—Time, force, and death
Do to this body what extremity you can ;
But the strong base and building of my
love
Is as the very centre of the earth,
Drawing all things to it.

It is to Ulysses that Troilus confides his loyal and simple belief in his love ; but Ulysses has watched Cressida's deportment among the free gallantries of the Grecian camp and has read her aright.

Fie, fie upon her !
There's language in her eye, her cheek,
her lip,
Nay, her foot speaks ; her wanton spirits
look out
At every joint and motive of her body.

It is in the company of Ulysses, whose cold sagacity has sounded human weakness, and of Thersites, whose cynicism delights in human corruption, that Troilus is witness of his lady's perfidy. On this, her first night away from Troy, Diomedé has come by appointment to visit her. He is not the Diomedé of Benoît, distracted and speechless with love ; he is only indifferent and petulant. It is Cressida who, with broken sentences, faltering allusions, and timid caresses, woos her unknighly suitor, while, standing in the shadow of the tent, her true lover looks on with burning eyes. When convictions can no more be held at bay, and Ulysses sums up the tale, "All's done, my lord," Troilus has no other answer but, "It is."

One could be glad if all were indeed done and if the world-old story ended here ; but before the close of her long literary history Cressida was to suffer a last humiliation. Chaucer had

pleaded extenuation for her perfidy ; Henryson had visited it with retribution ; Shakespeare had dropped the curtain upon it in silence ; it remained for Dryden to explain it away. His fastidious taste having taken umbrage at much in Shakespeare's play, he set himself, not only to correct words and phrases that were "ungrammatical, coarse, and scarce intelligible," but he also undertook "to remove the heap of rubbish under which many excellent thoughts lay wholly buried," including in the rubbish the passages of lordliest eloquence and phrases of most golden content !

If the age of the Restoration was facile in the matter of morals, it was exacting in claiming the most sublime sentiment.

Oh, what a blessing is a virtuous child, fervently exclaims old Calchas when his daughter consents to pretend love for Diomedé in order to forward their return to Troy. In the interests of virtue Cressida incurs her lover's wrath, and only convinces him of her innocence when she stabs herself and dies with the noblest sentiments on her lips. Troilus pays a tribute to her virtue and is on the point of following her example, when he remembers that various other characters must die before the tragedy is complete. Dryden had complained of Shakespeare's play that, "The chief persons who give the name to the tragedy are left alive ; Cressida is false and is not punished." These defects he has been careful to remedy.

And thus Cressida, born to the sound of arms amid the rude chivalry of a Norman camp, closes her long career amid the periwigs, the fustian sentiment, and stilted artifice of the stage of Charles the Second.

REQUIESCAT.

SOME seventy miles away from London lies a pleasant land. It lies in the bosom of a charming valley bounded on the north and south by long ridges of down, bare for the most part, but crowned at intervals by clumps of fir-trees growing (where they are found) so close together as to betray at once the fact that their planting was no matter of accident. In some places the downs rise to a not ignoble height; there is one point at least whence on a clear day you can see into seven counties. In spite of fir-plantations, your prevailing impression is that the downs are bare, with that curious newly shaven bareness peculiar to chalk hills; but the valley is well wooded, and its meadows are really green, in contrast with the grayer tints of the higher ground. With its many villages, scarcely ever more than three or four miles apart, lying asleep in its bosom; its lanes bordered with high trees and hedgerows springing from steep fern-clad banks; the canal, flecked here and there with lazy barges, shining along the whole field of vision, like a silver ribbon carelessly flung down,—this is the oldest country picture in our memory, and always comes to us first of the meanings connoted by the word *landscape*.

If you are afoot and do not love the roads, the region is generous in the matter of footpaths, running amid pasture and crops; and in more than one place, where instead of crossing one field the path divides two, the freeholder has seen fit to plant an avenue of noble elms and ashes, forming a place to linger in and leave

with regret; a place where fair dreams come easily, and with footprints that do not fade.

In one of the villages abounding in this kindly land stands a certain church with its gray square tower looking down on the road, which here runs twenty or thirty feet below it, and if we were strangers, we should probably take the red brick house in front, with its bay-windows and iron gates, for the parsonage. But it is not so; the parsonage is the rather dark, even dingy, house adjoining the church, with a small garden-wicket opening into the path through the churchyard. A most precipitous approach leads up from the road to its front door, where in the porch there hung a bell fit to summon a congregation with; and behind it on a bit of lawn grows a historic pear-tree, bearing such fruit as you cannot now buy for money.

In this parsonage there lived until about three years ago a man who was one of the most notable figures in our experience. One of the keenest sportsmen, and withal one of the best parsons in the district, a good man of business and a zealous public officer to boot, he exhibited talents rarely met with in combination. He was of Kentish extraction, and the little country living where he died was, we believe, left to him by his father, who owned it in fee. In his appearance he affected the sportsman rather than the parson, being commonly dressed in breeches, gaiters, and heavy boots, and a short gray coat with a most unclerical collar and necktie. He had lived in the village

for many years before we knew it; and in the days when his tithe rent-charge amounted to something nearer its commuted value, he was one of the best-known figures in the field that used to meet with a certain famous pack of hounds, a former master of which bore what is perhaps the greatest name in the annals of fox-hunting.

The old man never let a summer pass without walking one of the pack's puppies, and was consequently a regular attendant at the puppy-show at the kennels. One year the puppy was named Mermaid; and one day during her sojourn at the Vicarage, in her wanderings she came upon a prayer-book which, after the manner of puppies, she first worried into shreds, and afterwards devoured. The Parson's comment was characteristic. "Humph," he said, "I don't know if she ever learnt to read the Scriptures; but she has certainly marked and inwardly digested the same." Her meal however did not prevent her from becoming one of the most famous hounds in the pack; and for several reasons she always had a kindly greeting from the guardian of her puppyhood. If no horse were available, the Parson would sometimes walk to the meet, to greet his friends and see the hounds thrown into covert.

He was a great walker, and not uncommonly carried a rough stick as long as himself, fresh cut and without ferule of any kind, much the same as the local pig-driver is accustomed to find useful on his way to market. Thus armed he would frequently start in the small hours for a day's otter-hunting, and would be afoot till dinner-time, for, after a good old fashion, he never took but two meals in the day, his breakfast and his dinner. When it is added that he could throw a fly with considerable expertness and uncommon patience,

it will probably be allowed that his claim to the title of sportsman has been made out.

It is only about fifteen years since there died in this parish one whom he delighted to honour, the man who had been whip in the days of the renowned master aforesaid. Him, with many tears and the most genuine sorrow, did the Parson bury in state. The coffin was borne to the grave with the old huntsman's scarlet coat and cap and whip upon it, and with much solemnity committed to the earth. Then the Parson was moved to send a paragraph to the local paper as a small tribute to the dead man's memory. This paragraph we have never seen, it being considered, we believe, not altogether fit reading for the young person; but we need hardly say that it lives in the memory of many. The opening sentence was to this effect: "Another of the grand old huntsmen of the palmy days of the ——— has been run to earth at last"; and then, after recounting his virtues and singing his praises with a profusion of the metaphors of his profession, the paragraph concluded thus: "And when the last great who-whoop is heard, may the old huntsman be found ready." Some of his parishioners were a little bit shocked to see the Last Trump alluded to in that way; but the old man could not help it; if ever he had occasion to use a metaphor, it was almost certainly drawn from the hunting-field. Our own memory preserves an instance. Some one was to be buried in his parish who had died in another, the clergyman of which came over to the funeral. He was invited to take part in the service in the following terms: "See here, you'd better hunt them in the covert, and I'll take them in hand when they get into the open," meaning, of course, that the portion of the service appointed to be read in church should

be conducted by his friend, while he himself would take the portion at the grave's side. Again, on the birth of his second grandson he was seen swinging at a round pace through the village where the infant's mother lived, talking rapidly to himself, as his custom was; and some curious person managed to get near enough to hear him say, "Molly's got another dog-hound!"

In speaking of our old friend's fondness for sport in general it would not be right to omit mention of his love for cricket, which amounted to a perfect enthusiasm. He did not play much himself, though we have seen him handle a bat at practice with his village boys in a style that would have done credit to many a younger player; but he would always walk miles to see a good game. He was, as may be supposed, rather difficult to please, being, as so many sportsmen are, inclined to praise the past times at the expense of these. He looked, for instance, upon boundary hits, and the following an innings, as foolish and tiresome innovations, confusing to the issue and tending to the depreciation of individual prowess; and he regarded any man who, when taking guard, desired to cover anything but the middle stump, as a finicking pretender. Some of his decisions as umpire were certainly astonishing; but they were always given with such certainty and such manifest honesty of purpose as to make one doubt one's own eyes rather than his opinion.

Sportsman though he was, he was none the less efficient, nor indeed eccentric, in the discharge of such public offices as fell to his lot. These were three in number; he was Chairman of Petty Sessions, Chairman of the Board of Guardians, and Chairman of the School Board in his own parish. It was generally considered that he shone most conspicuously as Justice of

the Peace, and we always looked forward to Bench-day with peculiar eagerness. Nothing perhaps will exhibit the character of the district better than the following fact, that the Bench sat only once a fortnight, and that alternately in two villages five miles apart. It always meant a walk of five miles or ten for him, according to the village where the session was held; but down to his last illness he was always there, and would as soon have missed preaching to his flock on a Sunday.

He was a great champion of the dignity of the Bench and all connected with it, and woe betide the unhappy advocate who dared attempt to teach him anything about procedure. As a magistrate of some forty years' experience he very seldom met with a combination of circumstances that was new to him; and for any one to suggest that he was taking a view which the facts would not warrant, or that his method of conducting business could possibly be improved upon, would beget in him an impatience which he was not slow to manifest. Cross-examination he could never bring himself to see the use of; and this once brought down on him the thunder of *THE STAR*, in its riotous young days, before it became the respectful and reverent print that it now is. Some solicitor from a neighbouring town (the only local one being clerk to the Justices) once conceived it to be his duty in a certain case to instruct the rustic Bench in matters of law and practice; and as was only to be expected the reverend Chairman stopped his oratory without remorse. The unhappy soul, sawing the air, said, "But, sir, I stand here by the authority of an Act of Parliament." "We care nothing about Acts of Parliament here, sir," said the Chairman; "you have said all you have to say, and now perhaps

you'll be good enough to sit down." You may fancy how THE STAR would speak of a magistrate, who was also a parson, who "cared nothing about Acts of Parliament." On another occasion an eminent member of the Bar, whose name is abroad in all the courts, and who has since taken silk, was specially retained for the defence in an absurd charge of assault preferred against a neighbour by a cantankerous fellow with the view of satisfying a grudge against another party. Counsel was conducting a difficult cross-examination of the wary plaintiff with marked ability, and gradually, though slowly, extracting from him the necessary admissions, when the patience of the Chairman gave way; or it may have been a natural irritation at hearing the plaintiff, who was one of his own cloth, forced to exhibit the unneighbourly spite which was evidently the origin of the whole matter. At all events he told counsel that he was wasting the time of the court and suggesting motives for the plaintiff's conduct which he was not justified in suggesting. Counsel assured him, with very great respect, that he had not entirely appreciated the point aimed at, and was proceeding to explain, when the Bench interrupted him with, "If you don't go on with your cross-examination, I shall close it." Of course there was nothing more to be said. Counsel yielded gracefully, but we fancy he carried back to town the impression that no mere London practice, nor even a Borough Recordership, can teach all there is to be learned about the administration of justice.

But of our old friend's utterances from the Bench the following has always struck us as being in every way the most memorable, both as doing substantial justice on an offender, and also as tempering that justice, if not with mercy, at least with a human

sympathy and indulgence that cannot have been the least effective part of the sentence. A young fellow had been summoned by the Excise Authorities for shooting game when he had only an ordinary half-guinea gun-licence. He admitted the fact, and the Bench were inclined to deal with him leniently, seeing he was a good boy as a general thing, and industrious according to his lights; but the Excise Officer had instructions to press for a conviction, and the Court accordingly addressed the culprit as follows: "You know, Simmons, you're the victim of what I call a most unfortunate Act of Parliament, one that gives you a right to carry a gun, and then tells you you must only shoot this and that with it, and let the other alone. Now the Excise have pressed for a conviction, and we shall have to fine you a pound; but I know just how it is with you young fellows. You get your gun and go round the farm to knock over the rabbits as you have a perfect right to do, and then all of a sudden there is a whirr, and up gets a pheasant or something right in front of you; and your gun goes up to your shoulder instinctively, and you have a pull at it. I don't blame you a bit, and I should do the same thing myself."

In addition to being Chairman of Petty Sessions, the Parson also directed the deliberations of the Board of Guardians with remarkable ability, keeping a sharp eye upon the expenditure of the rates, but at the same time showing a large consideration for unmerited or unavoidable misfortune. The name of a claimant for relief, and the words "homeless, destitute, and in the workhouse," in a curious solemn intonation which always distinguished his utterance of that particular form of words, would thrill the occupants of the octagonal

Board Room, as though one of the major prophets had spoken; and Guardians who had come to gossip would fall silent, and may be pardoned if they began to pray. But there were certain public characters whom the Parson delighted not to honour; and particular attention did he always pay, in his double capacity of parish priest and Chairman of the School-board, to the visit of Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools. He was a harmless, well-intentioned person enough, this official, but he never managed to get in touch with the children, because he always would address them in classic English culled from the dictionary, a course which when adopted by a stranger invariably strikes the young natives of the district dumb with shyness or astonishment. As an instance, after one of the periodical inspections, the children had been dismissed, and shortly afterwards the Parson and the Inspector were walking back to the Vicarage, when the official dignity received a shock from the sight of a small maiden with a boot yawning wide, and about a foot of bootlace dragging in the road. "Little girl," said the representative of the Crown, "your bootlace is hanging in the dust, and requires attention; will you oblige me by fastening it, and by recollecting that habits of tidiness are of paramount importance, and that the earlier in life they are acquired the longer will be their career of usefulness?" The child stared, as though he had charged her with the manslaughter of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; but the Parson grunted, "Ugh! what's the good of talking to the child like that? Here, Meg, hitch up thy latchet;" at which the little maid laughed, and did as she was bid. The electric effect on the juvenile population of a few words in their own vernacular, changing their

dull, unintelligent indifference into alert sympathy, is one of the things that would probably strike a visitor as being most characteristic of the neighbourhood.

Let us now be allowed to give a glimpse of the man, to whose memory these pages are inscribed, in his social or unofficial character; and some pictures of him as pastor of his flock have been reserved for this section. They have been reserved designedly and without inconsistency, for he was one who wore his orders without any taint of officialism; in becoming a priest he had not ceased to be a man. It will be easily understood that he was excellent company. In his long ministry he had met with experiences that when related sounded like extracts from the pages of him who created Parson Adams. There was an old friend of his (a clergyman also), dead these many years, of whom he used to tell a story that will bear out our words. The good man was in the habit, during the absence from home of the incumbent of a neighbouring parish, of riding over immediately after his own morning service in order that the deserted ones might have an opportunity of meeting for worship during the afternoon at least, and that their tribute of praise might not fall too hopelessly into arrear. He always found a generous lunch awaiting him at his friend's rectory; after which he would conduct the service and ride home again. One afternoon the bells had been rung and the congregation were all in their places, ready for the weekly exercises; but the little bell continued its irritating iteration for some minutes past the appointed hour, and looks of inquiry began to be exchanged. Suddenly a figure appeared in the porch; it was that of the rectory groom, who said solemnly: "There wunt be no preachin' 'ere this a'ternoon, 'cos the

Paason 'e's mixed 'is liquors, and 'e's gone to bed." It was true, and that day the incense failed to rise.

Our old friend delighted in such reminiscences, but his own eccentricities were quite as striking in their way. The service at his church was, when we first knew it, of the most primitive order. There was a high reading-desk, with a higher pulpit, and a niche for the clerk below all; vestry there was none, and the Parson, who always preached in a black gown, stripped off his surplice in full sight of his flock and hung it over the altar-rail, making a striking appearance for a moment in broadcloth, before donning the garment of, as he conceived it, orthodox sable stuff. At that time, the musical accompaniment was provided by a small harmonium; but within his own memory the service had been assisted by almost as many instruments as summoned the Babylonians to the worship of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image; in fact he still preserved in the Vicarage an old violoncello, made of sheet iron instead of wood, which used to be played in the ecclesiastical orchestra. One day, greatly daring, the choir were performing "Lift up your heads, oh ye gates," from *THE MESSIAH*, and the man with the 'cello considered his part not sufficiently prominent, being a musician who was determined to play his instrument as though it were the only one in the universe; and so it came to pass that in one of the silent pauses after the words "Who is the King of Glory?" a hoarse voice was heard growling, "Pass I over the rozzum, Varmer Bull, and I'll soon show 'em who the King of Glory is!"

But afterwards the Parson's daughters grew up, and took music seriously, and the church was restored, and a choir formed; which on one occasion gave rise to a scene that caused smiles on

more than one countenance. The usual list with the numbers of the hymns, chants, and so forth, had been prepared by the young organist and placed in the choir-seats and of course in the reading-desk. The first hymn was always sung after the third collect. As the Parson gave out the number from his paper, there was a warning cough from the other side of the church where the organ was situated, a head was shaken, and a pair of lips strove to contort themselves into speech without words. The Parson again consulted his paper; the organist played over the tune she desired; the same number for the hymn was announced; but as the organist stuck to her guns, the congregation were hopelessly puzzled, except such of them as happened to sit near enough to the choir to gain the necessary information. Before the sermon the same disastrous muddle was repeated point for point; and the Parson flushed indignantly, as though he felt that he was being publicly flouted by his own flesh and blood. After the sermon, when all were waiting expectantly to see what would come of the announcement of the third and last hymn, he said in a tone which, though meant for his own edification only, was distinctly audible to most of those present: "No, you've put me wrong twice, and I sha'n't give out any more."

He never considered it irreverent to address any of his flock by name, or make some remark about him in his hearing, as he was either entering the church or leaving it. Once, as one of his best-known parishioners was making his way up the aisle, we all heard him say: "Ah, here comes Harry Farmer, and he's got a new hat; very good hat it is too, Harry, and looks uncommon well."

But with all this remarkable behaviour, he exercised a strong personal

influence over all those with whom he came in contact ; and it is not to be questioned that his parishioners were the best conducted villagers in the neighbourhood. If any man was a quarrelsome neighbour, given to drink or small dishonesty, the Parson would call upon him and talk to him in a strain such as few offenders could endure. He would tell a man for instance : " If you get drunk you sha'n't stop in this parish ; we don't want any drunken men here, and we won't have them." Whether influence was brought to bear on the culprit's landlord or not, we cannot say, but it is the fact that such folk either reformed themselves up to the level of their neighbours or else shifted their quarters. Upon occasion he would not scruple to use the ignorance of the evil-doer as a means for strengthening his warnings and rebukes ; as when he told one such : " Now, mind, if this sort of thing goes on, you'll be brought up before me next Bench-day, and I sha'n't spare you because you belong to my own parish ; and if that doesn't do you any good you'll be sent to the Quarter Sessions ; and if they can't reform you, the Assizes will have a turn at you ; and then if you don't mind what you're about, you'll

be handed over to the Barons of the Exchequer ! " To such a man it would have seemed less risk to walk willingly into Tophet than to disregard such a warning so delivered.

Naturally, he did not live his life without earning the hard opinions of many ; but those who blamed him were those whose personal knowledge of him was wilfully or accidentally limited. He died as he had lived, beloved by every soul in his parish, and the grief caused by the event spread far beyond its narrow boundary. To those who knew him there, the country-side can never be the same again. We shall miss beyond recovery his love for truth, his blunt condemnation of shams, his law-abiding honesty ; qualities which he was wont to inculcate no less plainly and impressively from the pulpit than in his daily life. We take no shame to say of him, as was said of another who won far wider renown, that he was a man

Whose life was work, whose language
rife

With rugged maxims hewn from life ;

Who never spoke against a foe ;

Whose eighty winters freeze with one
rebuks

All great self-seekers trampling on the
right.

Peace to his soul !

THAT AWKWARD BOY.

THE air was very still and laden with the perfume of innumerable flowers in the straight downpour of sunshine. The steaming sweetness of the earth rose in a vapour of light and heat, and the pungent scent of bloom fading in the sun, an infinity of light and colour, of hot heavy fragrance and ceaseless shining, of all that makes up the glory of white noon in a southern garden. And in the radiant midst of it all, a small gray figure wandered restlessly from bush to bush, from the bed of large pale violets to the tufts of windflowers, from the orange trees to the riotous tangle of tiny golden roses.

"Herr Baby! Oh, Herr Baby! You have broken that chair *this time*!" said Frau Horn.

"And knocked over my table,—and my work,—oh, do be careful, you very awkward boy! Can't you learn to remember that your feet are about a mile away from the rest of you?" added the little Baroness with a twinkle; but he was out of hearing, for he had seen Peggy going round the garden to say good-bye to the flowers she loved so well, and he had flung himself out of the window to have the chance of a last talk with her. He arrived upon his hands and face instead of upon his feet reasonably; but every one was used to the big Dutchman's clumsiness and no one more than himself, so he took such incidents as a matter of course, unconcernedly.

He had been big,—inconveniently, undesirably big—all his life, he said, though to be sure that was not such a very long time. But nobody would

have thought he was so young; even his awkwardness, which was colossal, as Frau Horn said plaintively, was not of a juvenile kind, and his huge limbs and spreading shoulders had something of the aged and ungainly look which is the birthright of an elephant. Then he had big, uneven features, that were built together in a studied irregularity, and a rough mane of red hair which never settled itself in less than two or three directions. Altogether, as his old Dutch nurse had said of him when he was (relatively) a small boy, "Hendrik isn't handsome, and there's so much of him that one never has a chance of forgetting it." He had a way, moreover, of looking so ponderously solemn, even in his most frivolous moments, that the very idea of youth seemed ridiculous in connection with him. There had, in fact, been a shout of laughter when it was discovered one night that he was only Peggie's elder by a few weeks; and she, who had hitherto been made much of as the baby of the Pension, transferred to him maliciously half her proprietary interest in the title. Ever since that he had been called among them Herr Baby, to replace the difficult gutturals that made up his name by right; as she had long been nothing other than Ma'amselle Baby even to the French chambermaids. For it takes so little to make one laugh in the midst of sunshine and flowers, and the uplifted mountains that shut out of sight the gray face of winter, and, perhaps, that other shrouded phantom from the fear of which one has for a little while got free.

The nickname was the little Baroness's doing in the first instance. She had made a pet of Peggie for the sake of her bright ways and laughing face, though, if it came to that, no one could be more elfinly merry and lovable than the little old lady herself. But then, if one has been crippled all one's life, in the course of time one arrives at being either a very detestable person, or just such a fairy god-mother as only a tiny old woman with the merriest wit in the world can be; and having chosen the latter, she had developed into a very exquisite morsel of humanity indeed. And she had set herself to pet and spoil Peggie with all her might, seeing, in her sweet shrewd wisdom, that the girl had pined for the want of it throughout her dreary young life; and since Hendrik, the big Dutchman, had been adopted as the other baby, the little Baroness had petted him too, though with a hesitating familiarity, much as one pats a great awkward dog that is apt to sweep the table with his responsive tail.

There had perhaps been a good deal of jealousy between Hendrik and Peggie (though, to be sure, it was all on one side) when the little old lady first began to divide her favours; but when you are only nineteen and wholesomely unsentimental, it is so much easier to be good friends, especially when the one is a pretty mischievous little girl, and the other a huge, good-natured, companionable boy. And after all, his very awkwardness had only been another excuse for laughter, and they were so ready to laugh in this safe little corner of the hills where it seemed so easy not to be ill; and Hendrik and Peggie had been the best of friends,—till, on a sudden, the end had come, and the news of her uncle's illness had summoned her home.

Peggie was wandering about the

garden, feeling very miserable. She had been so happy here, where everyone had been kind to her, and the sense of being a petted child among them had been so unfamiliar and so sweet. And it was hard to go back to that dark silent house where she was so little wanted, away from the sunshine and the large air and the flowers; even here she shivered when she thought of the gloomy street, all the more dull and lonely that London lay close outside of it. And she would be shut into it again, as she had been before, till all the old tired feelings came back, and the headaches and the pale cheeks that the sun had driven away. Yes, she was very unhappy; and yet when Hendrik picked himself up from the rose-bed into which he had tumbled, and slouched towards her, she met him with laughter.

"Oh," she cried, "Herr Baby, if you could only see yourself! Your face is covered with scratches, and you look *so*,—and besides, you'll spoil the roses, and it's such a pity!" He shook his red head solemnly. "I know," he said, in his guttural North-Dutch voice, "*I* know; I've spoiled them already. Bother! What does it matter? You are going away, and there's no one else that cares about them. And it can't make *me* any uglier than I am already."

Peggie surveyed him thoughtfully. "Oh, but I think it does," she said with an idea of consolation that was well meant; "yes, really it *does*. Besides, it makes you look as if you had been fighting, and that isn't respectable, you know, for a person of your age. Oh, Herr Baby, it's all very well to laugh, but isn't it dreadful that I must go away?"

Hendrik growled gutturally.

"It's all very well for you," she went on, with tears in her eyes; "you need not go for another month

yet, and you can come back next winter. I hate rich people that can do all sorts of things, when I can't. And you needn't pretend you come here for any reason except that you like it; nobody could be ill that had such great wide shoulders, I'm sure. Oh, you may cough, if you like, but that's nothing. When I was sent here, I had been ill, really ill, only uncle said he couldn't afford such useless expense again, and this time I had better just d—die. And then you are going to Holland, you horrid boy, to nice picturesque Holland, that I'd give anything to see. And I,—I must go back to that disgusting old street."

Peggie was more than half crying, and the words tumbled out unrestrainedly. She looked very small and very childish, standing in the midst of the blaze of sunshine, with her eyes tearful and shining under the shadow of her hat. Hendrik objected to that big hat; so often, in regarding her, he could see nothing but the top of it.

"I had much rather go to London than home to Holland," he said with gloom. "And I hate this place now. What shall we do without you? What will Signor Baruca do? What will the little Baroness do? And what shall I do, good Heavens! without Ma'amselle Baby?"

"You!" she answered, laughing through her tears; "you will break some more furniture and,—and I'm afraid you will let the little Baroness tumble. I don't think you really ought to try to help her about; and I *hate* that you should take my place."

"She wouldn't let me help her; and I could never take your place even if I tried. There isn't any one that could do things as,—as you do them. But when your uncle is better, can't you come back?"

"No," she said sorrowfully; "you

see he only sent me here because the doctor ordered it, and I had a few pounds of my own to pay for the journey. He told me he wouldn't do it again, so I needn't fall ill on purpose. He is not very kind, you see, and perhaps he is not very rich, or at least, he thinks he ought to spend his money on himself. And as it is, he has to dress and feed me, and I dare say I cost him a great deal. And he thinks I ought to stay at home; he says all this fancy for change of air is nonsense. I wouldn't mind so much if he wanted me, or if there were anything for me to do. But as it is——"

"There may be other people that want you," Hendrik remarked, with his eyes on the ground.

"There isn't any one else," she said with a sigh; "I have no one in the world that belongs to me but my uncle. That is why I have been so happy here, it has only been a holiday to you; but to me it was home—a great deal more homelike than anything I have ever seen."

"You,—you wouldn't marry me, I suppose?" he said suddenly, without looking at her.

"Marry *you*!" Peggie gasped helplessly. "Oh *no*! What an idea! I don't want to marry anybody,—and,—and oh, how funny to think of marrying you, you queer big boy!"

She broke into candid laughter, while Hendrik dug holes in the gravel with his foot. Peggie regarded him heartlessly; the scratches on his face made him really look so absurd; and how cross he was, to be sure,—any one would have thought that he was in earnest. But of course it was all nonsense. She put her hand through his arm, and stood on tip-toe to see him better.

"Now, Herr Baby," she said, "you *know* you don't mean it. Why, you never even thought of it till just this

minute! And suppose I had taken you at your word, where would you have been then? Only I'm not so foolish, and we have been such good friends, that it seems a pity that you should have spoiled it all at the last. But it sha'n't be spoiled; we'll forget it altogether; till some day, if ever we meet again, you will be ready to laugh at it with me, won't you?"

Hendrik looked away, over the top of her head. "I don't know that I want to forget about it," he said slowly; "and I think I would like you to remember too. I wish you would think over it a little, when you are away from here; and if it should happen that you changed your mind——"

"But I am sure I sha'n't," she murmured.

"If you should," he went on patiently, "I would like you to write and tell me so. Or at least, write, and I'll know what it means, whatever you say. I want you to promise me that, Ma'amsele Baby."

It was a long speech for him, and Peggie stared at him in a growing uneasiness. "Oh, yes," she said with a little hesitation, "I'll promise if you like. It would be a dreadful thing to do, you know, only there is not the least chance of it; please understand that. I—oh dear, I never even thought of such a thing at all!"

"Of course you didn't. That comes of being such an ugly awkward brute as I am."

She checked him indignantly. "You must not say such things," she explained, "in my hearing. We have been good friends, and I will not allow my friends to be ill-spoken of, even by themselves. And besides, it is not true."

"Even the little Baroness always calls me a clumsy boy."

"So do I, often. That's nothing; that's only a pet name; what *you* said

was much worse. And if you had been the handsomest man in the world, it would have been all the same. I never thought of marrying anybody, and I don't think I want to. I want to amuse myself; I want to have flowers, and sunshine, and people to be kind to me. I don't mean to be married at all."

"You'll change your mind some day."

"I sha'n't," and she stamped her foot impatiently. "Herr Baby, I hate to be contradicted! And you are making me waste my time, when I ought to be getting ready. It's quite late, already—oh dear, *dear*, how sorry I am to go away!"

She turned to go in, and he followed her lugubriously, tripping over her dress and his own feet, and decorated with a network of angry red scratches down one side of his face. Herr Baby was certainly not handsome.

There was a bad half hour to be gone through before Peggie, and most of the able-bodied residents at the Pension, arrived at the station. Frau Horn broke down helplessly in saying good-bye, and carried away her amiable foolish face and latest Parisian fashions to weep in private; and the little Baroness had at last to be forcibly removed from Peggie's arms, which were very loth indeed to let her go. Old Signor Baruca (who had a heart, as he explained ambiguously) was so ferociously ill-tempered that the rest of them wondered how Peggie dared to hug him with such irreverence; and Mr. Lawley-Green, who had tried to take refuge in a quite foreign facetiousness, had actually to wipe real tears from his own elderly eyes with the huge bandanna which he had brought out only to make them laugh. Ah! It had taken so little to make them laugh, all these sunny tranquil months; but this was the beginning of the end, and pres-

ently they must all go back to the other side of the hills, to meet that which might be waiting for them.

It was a dismal little party indeed that walked across to the station, where Peggie gulped down a sob as she remembered the night when she had arrived in the darkness, to be met with such a scent of roses and heliotrope and orange-blossom as almost set her crying with sheer delight and wonder.

Hendrik came up to her as they stood on the platform, and shook hands with her absent-mindedly. "Ma'am'selle Baby," he said in his gruff voice, perhaps just now a little hoarser than usual, "remember,—you promised. You won't forget, or let any other feeling keep you from— from writing, will you? You will be quite sure to remember?"

He coughed a little as he finished, and shivered; the day had clouded over, and the sunset chill was stealing into the air. Peggie looked up at him with a very childish and sweet penitence. "I won't forget," she said softly. "Only I'm so truly sorry! But I'm *sure* I shall never change my mind."

He paused a moment, holding her hand; then his eyes met hers. "I'll take the risk," he said; "I've got to take a good many risks. Perhaps—I hadn't thought of that—it may be better so, after all."

He turned away; and Peggie stood where he had left her, with a strange feeling somewhere about her throat, and a busy little imp in her brain asking many questions. What did he mean? And why had he gone away? She was not quite sure that she was not angry; and, and, *why* had he never looked at her like that before?

But here was the train; and, among them, she and her belongings were hoisted into a compartment, and

the last words, really the last now, were said. But where was Herr Baby? He had vanished, and Peggie, this time, was quite sure that she was angry with him. That he should not be there to see the last of her—that she was not to see him again—of course *she* did not care, but she was disappointed in him. Perhaps—perhaps *he* had begun to change his mind, already; perhaps that was what he had meant when he had said it might be "better so." But suddenly his red head and great shoulders filled the window, and a huge bunch of roses and a box of bonbons lay upon her lap.

"I almost forgot," he said; "I had left them in the waiting-room. You may as well have them. Good-bye, it's been very jolly, hasn't it?"

"Oh, thank you!" she cried; no, she really was not in the least angry with him, after all. "Dear Herr Baby, thank you with all my heart for—for everything. Oh, there's the train starting! Please don't tumble when you get down; you know you are so awkward. Good-bye and thank you,—Hendrik!"

Whether it was the shock of the last word, or only his usual difficulty with his unmanageable limbs, no one could say; but Herr Baby sprawled upon the platform all his long length, and a little rosebud chosen from the bunch he had given her fluttered down beside him from Peggie's vanishing hand.

"I knew he would tumble!" she said hysterically; "what dreadful legs he has! And—oh dear!—what a ridiculous way to see the last of him! But I wish,—I wish I knew why he said it might be 'better so.'"

And Peggie alternately laughed and cried till she tired herself out and went to sleep.

She had plenty of time to wonder

what Hendrik had meant when she got home. There, as she had expected, there was nothing for her to do; if the inexorable routine of the house was broken as regards the sick-room, she at least was no more free from it than she had ever been. She was given to understand that whatever might go on up stairs (where hospital nurses were installed, to the infinite disapproval of the old housekeeper), she must keep herself to the dismal dining-room with its shabby chairs set gloomily against the wall, and the gathered fire smouldering, black and comfortless, in a corner of the grate. Inevitable meals came up, were set before her, were taken away with no one to notice, no one to care whether she ate of them; even the daily walks with the maid at her heels were forbidden, as unbecoming to one living in a house of sickness. Her uncle did not want her, had never wanted her, near him; there was not even enough of a tie between them to move her with his danger. And perhaps Peggie had something of the hard-heartedness of youth which cannot realise the approach of change, and thinks that what it has been always used to must necessarily go on for ever. So she did not concern herself with the strange faces she sometimes met on the stairs, nor trouble herself when the doctor looked grave, but withdrew into the company of her own thoughts. Now and then letters (which she carried about with her for an hour or two unopened, so as to lengthen her enjoyment of them,) came from the little Baroness, and more rarely from the others; but they said very little about Hendrik, and somehow she wanted very much to know what he was doing.

"The awkward boy has grown worse than ever since you went, and will scarcely speak to us," one letter

said; "but he tries, by fits and by starts, to be helpful. The consequence is that he has broken three cups, a tumbler, two chairs, and a footstool. He says things are all made of egg-shell here, and he thinks he will go home."

And then some weeks later, when even in London spring was in full green, there was more news of him, this time from Frau Horn.

Herr Baby has gone, indeed, has been gone some time; very foolishly, as we all thought, for he had a terrible cough, and was looking very ill. And North Holland at this time of year is suicidal. He got a chill the day you left, when it turned so cold about sunset; he stayed out till quite late, walking on the hills, because the house, he said, was so dull—well! we all found it dull without you—so he got a chill. It seems his lungs were weak, and that was why he wintered in the South; he had thought himself cured, he told us (very grumpily, I assure you), but the mischief had broken out again, and he wanted to get home. Really, he did not look fit to travel. Oh, by the way, he gave me a message for you; he hoped you were well, and you were not to remember what he said to you, after all. It would be better so, he said. What is it all about, my dear? We are very curious.

Peggie had a good deal to think about when she had finished reading, and re-reading, her letter.

First of all she had to make up her mind what it was that would be *better so*; but it seemed to her, unwillingly, that she understood that now, though of course it was nonsense, and she would not let herself be worried by it. And then she had to find out what she had been thinking of, all through the long lonely weeks since she had come home; that was pretty easily done, too. And, lastly, she had to write a letter; and that was difficult if you like. Peggie wasted a great many sheets of paper, and went to bed at last with a tired hand and aching eyes; and the worst of it was, with the letter still unwritten.

Next morning she sat down to it again. This time she contented herself with a very few lines; she had heard of his cold (for, of course, it was only a cold,—it was so foolish to make much of it—) and hoped it was better; she was sorry he got it when seeing her off; and would he write, when he had time, to his, very sincerely, Peggie?

Then she surveyed it with dissatisfaction. "Write what you like," he had said; "I shall know what it means." Yes,—but suppose he did not understand? Suppose he was afraid to understand? He might think it was really no more than an inquiry after his cold—that cold! Peggie never seemed to get away from the thought of it. She added a very short postscript; "I have changed my mind." Her cheeks were scarlet as she wrote it, very small, in the furthest corner of the sheet; then she sealed it up in a great hurry, and when she heard the door open, she hid the envelope under the blotting paper. It was only the doctor with his daily report; she wished he would go away.

"A good deal better," he repeated, as he went out again. "Oh, undoubtedly, a good deal better. You will soon be relieved from all anxiety."

She hoped so; certainly, she hoped so; but it would be four or five days before an answer could come all the way from the furthest corner of Holland. There were times when she could not help being terribly afraid that, after all, it might be *better so*. If only Hendrik had not said that! She slipped out by herself, against all rules, to post the letter; she would not trust it in the nearest pillar, but walked to the district-office and stretched her hand out a dozen times to the gaping mouth before she let the little envelope slip out of sight. And no sooner

was it beyond her reach, than she snatched after it with a little moan of distress. For after all, it was a terrible thing for a girl to do; only when you had promised and when Hendrik was such a dear, stupid, awkward boy—here she began to laugh till she found that some one was staring at her; and fled home in a fright, to wait and remember.

It was five long days before the answer came; and when it did arrive, she sat for a long while with it in her hand, dreaming. Then the doctor came in, and talked about her uncle; and she listened to him dutifully, with a sincere attempt to feel that it concerned her. But since there had never been any tie between them save the mere habit of a dependence that was always made galling, her thoughts wandered in spite of herself, and the doctor's benevolent face looked at her incongruously from that environment of rose-bushes, of white-tipped mountains and sun-filled sky, whither she had retreated. Presently, when she was alone again, she forgot everything but that sunny corner in the lap of the hills where the scent of flowers hung constantly in the sleepy air; and where it had been so easy to laugh, and be happy, and to be well and strong,—as strong as Hendrik with his great shoulders. And how he had taken her by surprise, that last day in the garden! He had done it so,—so awkwardly; yes, it had been so like Hendrik, and with the scratches all down his face, too. Peggie laughed so happily that she cried a little also as she recalled it; what a little ignorant goose she had been; but it was all his fault,—why, she had not even thought he was in earnest! And it was only at the station that his eyes had made her understand—dear stupid Hendrik, *why* had he never looked at her like that before?

And then he had said it might be *better so*. Ah, if only she could forget that! But some day soon she would scold him for it; it was such a horrid thing to have said to her; such a horrid thing to *think*, he who was so big and strong that certainly there could be nothing the matter with him. And of course a cold,—even if you called it a chill—was nothing. But she would scold him for it, and he would go South again this winter, and perhaps,—who knows?—she would be there to take care of him and to prevent him from going out in the sunset hour to say good-bye to foolish little girls.

But how funny it had been, that last sight of him! She remembered his long legs sprawling on the platform, and,—yes, she remembered the little yellow rosebud that had fallen by his side. But in spite of that, it had really been an unromantic farewell.

She opened the envelope at last, tenderly, smiling to think that she did not know his handwriting; and kissing it, with a little laugh at her-

self, where his hands must have touched it. Then,—her own letter dropped out, sealed, as she had sent it, wrapped in a half-sheet of paper, with a few blurred lines written across it. And besides there was a little withered rose.

Peggie stared at the paper for a while, and wondered vaguely why she could not understand. "It was better so," his mother wrote; "he could not have lived long." He had said that, too; he had meant that. And then he had tumbled on to the platform,—he always did tumble—and with the scratches all down his face!

She began to laugh, because there was something in her throat that choked her. She was sure that Hendrik could not have known how to die becomingly. "He must have been—so—ridiculously—awkward—about it!" she gasped.

When one laughs like this, it is difficult to stop. But then it would be a long time before Peggie would laugh again.

THE SICILIAN PEASANT.

THE lottery (*lotto*), to people always plunged in poverty, is the reviver of hope; their one dream of a chance of greater prosperity. From one Saturday to the following the poor classes of Sicily live on that hope, only too often to be disappointed. At Palermo the numbers of the lottery are drawn on an open terrace overlooking the court-yard of the Palace of Justice. Among the crowd of lawyers, plaintiffs, defendants, witnesses and others, going to and from the law-courts, there can be distinguished by its rustic apparel a second crowd. The units of which it is composed move restlessly about, waiting for the public drawing of the lottery to commence. But when the child chosen for the purpose is blindfolded and plunges its arm into the turning-barrel, the people suddenly stand motionless and silent, and many a prayer is breathed as the numbers are proclaimed, followed by muttered curses when fortune proves unpropitious.

It is curious to learn which are the favourite saints of the gamblers. One of the most popular in Sicily is Saint Pantaleone, to whom prayers are addressed for nine consecutive evenings at a fixed hour. The formula used by some people runs as follows:

Holy Saint Pantaleone,
Thou hast suffered on earth;
Thou wast born in Naples;
Thou didst die in Rome.
By thy sanctity,
By my poverty,
Grant me success for pity's sake.

Popular opinion fixed on Naples as the birthplace of this saint, because

Naples was considered to be the fatherland of the lottery, and the Palermitan always played the numbers which had been prizes in Naples. Much earlier the numbers successful in Rome had been the favourites, and in remembrance of that fact Rome was designated as the city where the saint died. On the ninth day of the fixed prayers a table is placed in the centre of the room, paper, pens and ink laid ready, and the door set wide open, so that Saint Pantaleone may enter and write down the numbers. The saint, who is represented as of gigantic stature, is supposed to be very severe towards those who are afraid of him, and to carry a thick stick with which to make his severity manifest.

Another favourite is Saint Alessio, who is evoked during three evenings in the following manner:

Saint Alessio, holy man,
God loveth thee,
I adore thee,
Write me three numbers on the wall.

On the third night the saint appears in a dream writing numbers on the wall. Saint Lucia is besought to use her influence with her brother, Fra Gilormi, that he may descend from heaven and reveal the winning numbers to her devotees. But the petitions of most lottery-players are addressed to the souls of executed criminals, a kind of devil-worship not easy to explain. A favourite soul is the *Anima Pia* (pious soul), who was executed in the seventeenth century. These souls in purgatory have need of the prayers of the living, who threaten to withhold them if no help is vouch-

safed. The Anima Pia is propitiated by a lighted lamp placed on four evenings in the four different corners of a room. Lottery-numbers are then revealed in a dream, and strict secrecy imposed on the person who dreams them.

Witchcraft is also invoked by the gamblers as well as the saints. Persons believed to know of winning numbers are called *subjects*, and are possessed by a spirit. A certain priest and three monks, long since dead, are still famous for having made the fortunes of several individuals. The system of numbers used by the cabalists is very complicated and confusing, the figures being mixed intricately and one standing for another. A more simple way is to play the numbers attached to various events, objects, or personages. If some one plays in the lottery with the assistance of Saint Lucia, for instance, he plays *twenty-four* for her eyes and the date of the day on which he buys his ticket. On the Day of the Dead (November 2nd) *five* is the figure of the tomb, *thirteen* of the wax candles, and *twenty-five* of the mass. There are special numbers for every saint's day or other holiday; and there are numbers belonging to the special attributes of the saints, as for example, to Saint Anthony's pig or Saint Joseph's staff. When the moon happens to be full on a Friday, it is believed that objects may be seen on its disk, and then the numbers attached to such objects are played. A hen's first egg held up to the light shows winning numbers, and numbers may also be discerned in a cod's liver if gazed at intently. No doubt many of these superstitions are survivals from very ancient times, which have undergone innumerable transformations and cannot now be traced.

The Sicilian peasants believe that every material object has its impalpable image, or double, which can be

detached and penetrate other bodies, and in this way the people explain the phenomena of dreams. Certain popular meanings are attached to many objects. Thus a butterfly, seen in a dream, means good luck, and so does a black beetle. A black hen foretells a marriage; a carnation means successful love; a balloon indicates a lie; an egg bad news, if anybody ever dreams of an egg. White grapes are the sign of tears; a lost tooth of the death of some one dear to the dreamer; all kinds of sweetmeats indicate bitter woe. And all these objects have each its special number, which must be played in the lottery.

Poor women pray to their dead relations before going to bed. Mommino, the writer of the articles from whom these facts are drawn, knew a woman who, only a year ago, refused to take flowers to the family tomb on All Souls' Day, because none of her dead relations had ever revealed winning numbers to her in a dream. "They forget me," she said, "so I will forget them."

The people argue that, as the Church teaches the doctrine of immortality, it must be possible for the souls of the dead to revisit earth and benefit those whom they loved when alive. The Church teaches that miracles were performed by the apostles, therefore miracles are possible; the Church teaches that there were prophets, consequently prophecy must still be possible; the Church prohibits the invocation of the Devil, therefore there must be a Devil to invoke, and unscrupulous people may well apply to him for assistance. Thus argue these superstitious people, with a curious mixture of logic and faith.

During his examination into the superstitions of Sicily Mommino met with such a mass of material and

evidence that he felt transported back, he says, into the Middle Ages. Charms are used and amulets worn; professed witches or wizards, who have undergone a novitiate before practising, are the persons who perform the charms.

When any one believes himself to be bewitched, he begs the assistance of one of these wizards, who thereupon sprinkles his door at twilight with sea-water, pronouncing an incantation over it. This is done for three consecutive evenings, after which the bewitched person will see his tormentor in a dream. Not long ago there was a noted witch in Sicily who was called Signora Richard, being supposed to be possessed by a spirit of that name. Being summoned to the house of a sick girl she drove thither, and, on entering the chamber, called out, "Richard, come and see what is the matter with this girl." After a short pause, a sepulchral voice, produced by ventriloquism, answered, "I am here." Signora Richard, pretending to receive instructions from this spirit, then told the relations to go on such a day and hour to a certain mountain and cave, where they would find the charm which was working all the mischief. Naturally the poor ignorant peasants found the charm, either in the shape of an egg-shell containing a lock of hair the colour of that of the patient and mixed with a quantity of nails and pins, or a small orange stuck full of needles. With this they returned home and sent for the witch, who, removing the pins, suggested to the patient that, as she did so, her pains would leave her; this of course they did, and then the Signora was overwhelmed with tokens of gratitude. There still lives at Bagheria, near Palermo (or did when Mommino collected his facts) a witch known as the Countess, who is in great repute among the peasants. Her advice is always implicitly obeyed by her clients,

whose sickness, like Simætha's, is generally of the heart, caused by jealousy or unrequited love.

The love-charms of Sicily are many and curious. One, very popular and considered very powerful, is to put into an egg-shell a few drops of the blood of the longing lover. The shell is exposed to the sun for three days and to the dew for three nights. It is then placed on hot ashes until calcined, when the whole is reduced to a fine powder, and administered secretly in a cup of coffee or a glass of wine to the object of affection. Another charm is for the witch to undress at midnight and tie her clothes up in a bundle which she places on her head; then, kneeling in the centre of her room, she pronounces an incantation, at the end of which she shakes her head. If the bundle falls in front of her it is a good sign; should it fall behind her the charm will not avail. Yet another is worked in the following manner. Pieces of green, red, and white ribbon are purchased in three different shops, the name of the person to be charmed being repeated mentally each time. The shopkeeper must be paid with the left hand, the ribbon being received in the right. When all the pieces are bought, they are taken to a witch, who sets out to find the person to be charmed. On finding him, or her, the witch mutters to herself, "With these ribbons I bind you to such a one." Then she returns the ribbon to the purchaser, who ties them beneath his or her left knee, and wears them at church.

Near Trapani there is a church dedicated to Saint Vito (Vitus) to which repair those affected by nervous diseases. A strange scene once took place there. A young girl, a monomaniac, was taken to the church by her parents, who tried to make her kneel and pray but she opposed, a

mute and obstinate resistance. A young peasant then with an iron spoon forced open her mouth. The poor girl, resisting until the blood started from her lips, fell into strong convulsions. The peasant put his mouth close to hers, and called loudly to the demon, by whom she was supposed to be possessed, to cease tormenting her. Meanwhile another girl, the betrothed of the young peasant, seized him by the waist and tried to drag him away, fearing that the evil spirit, on leaving the monomaniac, would take possession of her lover. One of the priests attached to the church would have interfered to put an end to the disgraceful scene, but did not dare to do so for fear of the populace.

Their amulets are very precious to the Sicilians, and it would be difficult to procure in the island such a collection as was exhibited in Paris in 1889. Especially valued, as an antidote to sore throat, is the head of a viper which has died a natural death. The tooth of a shark, the hair of a wolf, a bit of limestone cracked by a thunderbolt, an aerolite, a piece of candle that has shone on the face of one dying in mortal sin,—all these are potent amulets. One poor peasant, visited by Mommio, refused to part with a false coin over which a monk had breathed a charm against malaria. Another woman was equally stubborn not to part with a needle, with which she had pricked a still warm corpse; it had acquired, she said, the power of protecting her from every danger.

Besides all these charms the strangest things are administered by these ignorant and superstitious people to their sick. Roasted insects in the form of pills, dried and pounded frogs and snails, garlic juice, spices mixed with yeast, are a few of these queer medicines. Yet a study of the popular use of herbs in Sicily might

possibly lead to the re-discovery of a real specific, for the use of herbs has descended from father to child from very remote times.

How do the people who cherish such superstitions as we have described live? It is a squalid picture indeed that presents itself to the inquirer, its wretchedness only mitigated by the exquisite climate of the beautiful island.

A Sicilian peasant's house consists of one room with a kind of attic above, roughly roofed with tiles, through the imperfect joinings of which the rain drips in wet weather. In this single room are huddled together parents and children, the mule or ass, the pig, and the fowls. On one wall stands the crib of the mule or ass; not far off is the pig-trough; a perch across one corner serves for the fowls, while a cord stretched across another contains the family wardrobe, which is never too large. On the walls, blackened by smoke, are fastened by a bit of masticated bread in lieu of gum, cheap prints of saints, or of souls in purgatory. The family bed is a mere mattress, and the bed-clothing well-worn sheets, sheepskins, and old cloaks. An ancient table, a few straw-bottomed chairs, and a chest or two complete the furniture. By the hearth hangs a small sack filled with all kinds of wooden spoons; on a shelf stand the terra-cotta lamp and a few pots and pans. In some houses there is also an old-fashioned weaver's loom. In the attic the hay and corn are stored, and if it be roomy, it serves also for the children's bedroom; if not, the parents endeavour by hanging clothes on a rope, or by a paper screen, to separate their own resting-place from that of the older children. Of the gold and pearl earrings and necklaces, which are the pride of the class above them, there are none in these poor peasants' houses. Even the wedding-

dress of the mother has long since been sold or pawned, never to be redeemed.

A Sicilian cottage may seem a picturesque object to the passing traveller, but it is in reality a sad spectacle. Ruinous, filthy, and damp, these homes of the toilers are little better than a beast's den. There is no poetry in the condition of the women who inhabit them, though the popular songs of Sicily are full of the beauty of the island-women, who are compared to stately palms, whose coral lips are fountains of delight, whose hair illuminates the chamber like the sun, for golden hair and blue eyes are greatly prized by the dark-complexioned Sicilians. It is said that the bells ring of their own accord when a beautiful peasant-girl is born, and that she grows up under the protection of the Madonna and the Pope; but the real peasant-girl lives in a room little better than a stable, with beasts of burden for her companions, while in song she dwells in a palace and is waited on by the fairies, and when she walks on the sea-shore the waves grow calm at the sight of her, and carnations spring up beneath her feet.

The peasant-girl of Sicily develops very early, is married at thirteen or fourteen years of age, and is an old woman at twenty-five or thirty, worn out by toil and insufficient nourishment. Wretched bread, which looks as if made of rusty iron dust, herbs, onions, and some few vegetables, is the common diet of the Sicilian country women. They seldom taste wine, and when they do, it is a poor kind sourer than vinegar. The women, in fact, live in a constant state of semi-starvation; their work in the fields, which is rare, is poorly paid, and work at the loom very little better. Therefore the wife and children of a peasant depend almost

entirely on the wages of the husband and father, who on the average can only work eight months in the year. The women help their husbands to thresh the corn, prepare the refuse of the wine-press for their own wretched vintage, or burn the stones of the pressed olives into a fine charcoal. They do little else, and have never been taught the virtue of neatness and cleanliness in their homes. It is a miserable life; little wonder, when the distress in Sicily was so great in 1893, that they should have encouraged their husbands and brothers to revolt, and headed the roving bands of unemployed peasants.

A Sicilian harvest-field is not a beautiful scene. Picture to yourselves long miles of land baking in the intense heat. Among the ripe corn bend rows of mowers, their heads shaded from the sun by handkerchiefs only. Behind them stretch the already reaped fields; before them the uncut corn stands stiff and motionless in the breathless glare. The sky is white with heat, and fire seems to rise from the ground; the eyes of the reapers are dazzled by the reflection of the shining corn; the veins on their foreheads are swollen to bursting. During the mid-day hours, when the heat is worst, you would not be surprised to hear them curse their labour. But they do not curse; instead they sing a chant of praise, for they are in the main a contented folk and thankful for their lot, so long as they can find work. But the joy of harvest-time has no reality for the Sicilian peasant. His share of its profits is very small, for he is hard-worked and miserably paid. His nourishment, provided by his employer, is very poor, a hunch of bread flavoured with an onion, a lettuce, or a few olives; and the chief meal in the evening consists only of a little macaroni seasoned with olive-oil.

which is eaten, as the Sicilian motto runs, "first with the eyes and then with the hand," out of the pot in which it is boiled. In the best of times it is all the poor fellow can do to bring up his family; and if obliged to borrow seed or money, he must pay for the loan at the rate of at least twenty-eight per cent. It would need but a little to cause a revolt in Sicily which might be perilous.

We will close our sketch with two curious Sicilian fables.

"One day the Almighty called the people of the earth together, in order to distribute its treasures among them. The first to come were the nobles, on whom were bestowed lands and rivers. Then came the priests, who were given authority over the heavenly kingdom, which they immediately began to sell. Lastly came the peasants, but there was very little left, and they had to be contented with the ass for a gift."

The second legend runs to the following effect.

"At the creation God cast into space suns, moons, comets, worlds, and stars. He then rested, and amused Himself by creating smaller things. One day He created the flies; but, thinking them too numerous, spiders were created to keep them in check. Next were made the rats, and as they were exceedingly prolific, cats quickly followed. At last, in a merry hour, the Almighty created a beast with a grave but ridiculous visage. This beast immediately looked up at the Creator, and asked, 'What is my name?' The Creator gave him a name, and the creature galloped away braying with delight. In his course he encountered a mule who asked, 'What are you called?' The ass pondered; he had already forgotten his name. Forthwith he galloped back and said to the Creator, 'I beg your pardon, but I cannot remember my name.' Then the Almighty laughed, and pulled the animal's ears, saying, 'Donkey, you are called an ass!'"

PANTOMIME IN PARIS.

PANTOMIME, said Lucian, is the finest of the arts; and even if you reject the assertion for a paradox, you cannot deny that, like other paradoxes, it holds a grain of truth. For pantomime is not perplexed with platitude and garrulity. The mime, who is himself the concrete expression of his author's meaning, has but a meagre chance of tedium. Depending for his effect upon movement and gesture, upon the lifting of a hand or the sudden flashing of an eye, he has less temptation to exaggerate his part than the actor, whose voice is ever ready to interpret commonplaces, and to disturb the legitimate action by vain tirades. Of course, if he be inartistic, he may pervert a simple action to a tragedy; his rolling eye may give to the removal of a boot the semblance of a death-agony. But his opportunities of mischief are restrained: an ox is laid upon his tongue; and though he walk the stage, he is forced to recognise the sovereignty of silence.

Deprived of speech, the mime must needs be subtle in gesture and lucid in movement. With his means of explanation curtailed, it is idle for him to flourish and tramp, as he might were his voice there to correct the false impression. And so the very rigour of his art gives it a fineness, which even Lucian has scarcely overpraised. Moreover pantomime is the result of an unbroken tradition. As it was invented by the ancient Greeks, so it was practised in Rome, and so it passed through the *Comedia del'Arte* to the theatres of Paris and London. This art, in fact, knows not the dividing barrier of

speech; in every country its language is the same; though gesture may be modified by a personal imagination, though the school of Milan, for instance, is more elaborate than the school of Paris, the essence of gesture remains unchanged; and since the mime of to-day elects to play the same parts which his predecessors rendered illustrious, we may catch from the few surviving exponents of this art a faint breath of the genius which keeps fresh the memory of the past. The actor's name is writ in water. When once the echoes of his voice are silent, his work is done and dead. So individual an adornment is speech, so loose the tradition of the theatre, so quick the change of fashion in plays, that you cannot from to-day reconstruct the achievements of yesterday. But the mime, who is still Pierrot, mimics the past with a constant fidelity; he can no more shake off the chains which Déburau put upon him, than Déburau was able to disengage himself from the example of his masters. Hence, if you would understand the art of Déburau, you cannot do better than watch the performance of Severin, who at the Folies Bergères has rediscovered an ancient rôle of the celebrated clown, and plays it with a perfect respect for the time-honoured convention.

Indeed, a revival of pantomime seems not improbable, a revival which might restore to the world a half-forgotten pleasure. For pantomime though it has never died, has yet dwindled, and outside the borders of Italy its professors are few and obscure. In England its golden age was

the last century, and Garrick himself had a proper appreciation of the artist who

Though masked and mute, conveyed his quick intent,
And told in frolic gestures all he meant.

Nor did the art fall rapidly into desuetude. Even when the *Théâtre des Funambules* was at the top of its prosperity, an English clown rivalled Déburau himself, and many were the pantomimes played after the English fashion. Then came a period of decline. The clown, associated most intimately with a hot poker, was given a voice, and the harlequin alone preserved a dignity of stony silence. Of late years the art was restored to London by Paul Martinetti, an admirable actor, fit alike for comedy or tragedy, who was born with the flour on his face, and who has modified the stern traditions of Milan by an observation and picturesqueness all his own. In France, on the other hand, the history of pantomime is summed up in the single name of Déburau, and it is fortunate that, at the very time when Severin is giving us a vision of the art once practised on the *Boulevard du Temple*, a serious history is published of the *Théâtre des Funambules*.¹ Thus you may correct your impression of the stage by the study of documents, and revivify the ancient records by the exquisite performance of an artist.

Not for the first time has Déburau won the honour of biography. He was still acting (at thirty-five francs a week) when Jules Janin published the life which was nothing else than a breathless panegyric. And the printed applause of Gautier, Champfeury, and Glatigny is sufficient to keep his fame green. But M. Pericaud

is less a eulogist than a historian. Though he yields to none in admiration of his hero, he has proved this admiration not by the mere recital of the artist's graces but by the patient collection of all such documents as may illustrate his career. Nothing has escaped his diligent search,—not a play-bill, not a contract, not a single cutting from the press; and you will estimate the difficulty of his toil, if you remember how ephemeral is the life of a popular theatre. At the outset a colleague of Déburau's own, none other than the great Vautier, came to his aid with a portfolio of notes, which he has set forth with admirable fidelity. His book, in brief, is rather a quarry than a marble slab, but in this quarry you may find all the material for a perfect monument. Jean Gaspard Baptiste Déburau, then, was born to a family of acrobats in 1796. It was in Bohemia that he first saw the light, and the birthplace was appropriate to so renowned a gipsy. His early years were spent in ceaseless journeyings up and down Europe. Wherever his father could find a pitch, there the piece of carpet was spread, and there his brothers tumbled to the thrumming of a guitar. They were known at every fair in France and Germany, and more than once they travelled as far as Constantinople to astonish the Grand Turk. The elder brothers, Nievmensek and Etienne, were renowned acrobats and unrivalled dancers on the tight rope; but Gaspard, whose genius was reserved by fate for a higher employ, was clumsy at the double turn, and could never guide his faltering steps across the slack wire. Years of wearisome practice were rewarded only by failure and many a heavy fall, until in despair his father made him a clown, to receive the kicks of his brothers and to set off their greater skill by his own awkwardness. So

¹ LE THÉÂTRE DES FUNAMBULES DES MIMES, SES ACTEURS ET SES PANTOMIMES DÉPUIS SA FONDATION JUSQU'À SA DÉMOLITION; par Louis Pericaud. Paris, 1897.

he would beat the drum at the tent-door, and attract an audience with the voice destined hereafter to keep perpetual silence. The family wandered from town to town, from country to country, making a scanty living and sleeping under the stars. Its renown was no greater than that which commonly falls to the lot of the travelling acrobat, and for all the father's pride in his trade the name of Déburau was still unknown, when in 1817 a lucky chance brought the gipsies to Paris, and Gaspard, the despised and maladroït, found the opportunity which genius never lacks.

The Théâtre des Funambules, immortal to-day, was then but a year old. Established by one Bertrand, a buttermilk man, in desperate rivalry with Madame Saqui, whose acrobatic pantomimes were already famous upon the Boulevard du Temple, it won an instant triumph. It was nothing more than a glorified gaff, whereto the admission was not a penny but four sous; yet at the very outset it witnessed the first appearance upon any stage of the great Frédéric, whose genius was destined to dominate the theatre of France and to turn the worst comedy of his time into the most brilliant farce. Whatever reputation the theatre possessed was confined to its own quarter. It was the haunt of all those who lived in the neighbourhood of the Boulevard du Temple, and was no better known at the Tuileries or the Faubourg Saint-Germain, than if it had been hidden away in the dusky corner of a country town. But those who went once, came again; in truth, they sat night after night in their shirt-sleeves, applauding the favourites and gazing open-mouthed at the silent antics of the clowns. And when the curtain fell they would follow their heroes to the wine-shop across the way, and feed their vanity by a furtive ap-

proach to genius in undress. The trappings of the theatre were the simplest; a few rough boxes were reserved for the curious who came from the other side of the water, but for the rest an audience of the suburb packed the benches and resented with fury any opposition to its wishes. The orchestra was small and inexpert; the costumes were modest, and a bag of flour was more useful than the rouge-pot. At the beginning a spring-board and a tight-rope were among the necessary properties, but as M. Bertrand refined his art these primitive aids to activity were discarded, and the pantomime took on that complexion which it retained for half a century. Meantime Frédéric had sought fame elsewhere, and Gaspard Déburau, whom Jules Janin presently described as the greatest comedian of his time, was ready to conquer Paris. Already he had aided his family to achieve something of a success at the Théâtre des Chiens Savans, and was taking his share in a modest entertainment provided for the idle in the Cour Saint-Maur, when M. Bertrand arrived with the offer of an engagement. A performance on the tight-rope was just at an end, and the single guitar, which served the troop for an orchestra, was jingling an epilogue. "How much do you make a day?" demanded M. Bertrand in the pride of management. "What's that to you?" replied old Déburau, who, no less independent than genial, was Mr. Micawber made manifest. "But I bring you fortune," declared the pompous buttermilk man. "Oh, well," reflected the acrobat, "we make twelve or fifteen francs a day, sometimes sixteen, never more. But we are content. Paris is the fatherland of the arts. We do not complain that we are here; for here artists are reckoned at their true value, and it is our boast that we are

artists." The manager was not one whit abashed at this magniloquence, and offered to buy the whole family for one hundred and fifteen francs a week, terms which were presently ratified in a wine-shop. "Hurrah for the tavern!" shouted old Déburau as he followed Bertrand across the road. "Two sealed bottles in a private room, and the burgess pays!" Gaspard, who hitherto had concealed his talent, was thrown in as a make-weight; yet within a year the family had again taken to the road, and Gaspard alone remained in the Boulevard du Temple to create a new art and to make his name a synonym for the Théâtre des Funambules.

He never left the theatre after his engagement, and until his death, in 1846, he preserved an unalterable loyalty to his art and his management, a loyalty ill enough requited by a salary of thirty-five francs a week. Once he was invited to join the Opera, but he instantly repulsed this offer of wealth and glory, and he died almost on the stage he had made his own, after an ovation from the whole suburb, which with its quick susceptibility knew that its favourite was making his last appearance. His gentle life was disturbed by a single incident; a trial for murder. In a moment of justified anger he raised his cane to a rascal who had insulted his wife; the rascal died, and Déburau was righteously and triumphantly acquitted. For the rest, his history is the history of Pantomime; his career is the career of Pierrot, that wayward creature, whose floured face and changing moods, as we know them to-day, were the invention of Gaspard Déburau.

From the moment that he played his first part, in *HARLEQUIN MÉDECIN*, his success was never in doubt. And the success was no more than his achievement merited. At a blow he transformed the part of Pierrot,

who, having from immemorial time been the victim, suddenly became the aggressor, and kicked Cassandre up and down the stage as he would. The plays wherein he was cast gave infinite opportunities to his grotesque genius, and to those innumerable contrasts of character and temper which since his time have been the very essence of Pierrot. By turns he was simple and cunning, idle and active, mischievous and soft-hearted, a glutton, a thief, a braggart, ingenious always in the satisfaction of his tastes and ever pathetic in his disappointments. An admirer once described him as a simple-minded Satan turned buffoon; and this covers but a corner of his character. There is scarce one of his parts in which pathos also is not evident, and that tragedy, near ally to the ridiculous, which drowns laughter in tears. Nor was he careless in aught that concerned Pierrot. He changed his costume that he might the more deftly realise his ideal. Having replaced the tight jacket, that we know from Watteau, by a blouse, he disdained the big collar of convention that he might get full advantage from his long neck, and more wisely still discarded the hat which threw a deep shadow upon his white face and deprived it of half its expression. Now, the mime's face is the focus of his art, and nothing should darken this mirror of terror and pity, of laughter and chicanery. To Déburau a grimace was a flash of wit which he would sacrifice to no habit of the stage; and if one jot of his eloquence escaped the audience, the lapse was due neither to lack of thought nor to ignorance of his craft.

The mime, said Lucian, doubtless with his tongue in his cheek, must have a fine genius, a critical judgment of poetry, a ready and comprehensive memory. Like Homer's Calchas, he must know the past, the present, and

the future. Like the orator, he should aim at being always perspicuous; he must be understood though he is dumb, and heard though he says nothing. That Déburau had few of these accomplishments is certain; it is also certain that he fell nothing short of Lucian's ideal; for he possessed that penetration which is the gift of genius, and which enabled him, despite his ignorance of poetry, to render intelligible the subtlest emotion of the heart. Above all, his dumbness was brilliantly expressive; his silence was more convincing than the speech of others. *Here lies one who without speaking said all*, should have been his epitaph, and he said all to such purpose that the echo of his eloquence is not yet lost. To his physical perfection a thousand writers bear witness, and the dainty portraits of Bouquet, his painter in ordinary, are an eloquent commentary on his art. He did not act the part of Pierrot; he was Pierrot himself. His thin, oval face, his delicate features, his eyes that always asked a question belonged to the wayward, foolish, cunning, timid, courageous youth who was his creation. His lean figure was elegant or grotesque at will, and his attitudes, if comic, were never awkward. As he sat at table, he seemed even short; when he rose his long legs, apt for dancing, put him head and shoulders above his fellows. His gesture was always sober, his method the perfection of simplicity. Though tempted by his rôle and his audience to extravagance, he was never guilty of caricature, and so loyally did he esteem his art that in thirty years he spoke but two words upon the stage (*Achetez salade*), and he never ceased to regret the indiscretion. One wave of the hand was sufficient to evoke laughter or to compel tears. When just before his death the spectators demanded a dance of

the tottering limbs which could hardly support his fragile body, a single gesture drove them to repentance and apology. His rag-picker, says an enthusiast, was a masterpiece of penury and greed; yet when he came upon the stage, the valet of a marquis tricked out in his master's dressing-gown, he carried it with the distinction of a polished courtier. And yet with all his variety he seemed a child, behind whose sardonic smile and serene gaiety there lurked a furtive inexplicable melancholy. His innumerable rôles are a faint suggestion of his versatility. To-day he was a baker or a conscript, to-morrow a cobbler or a doctor. But behind the feigned profession there always laughed the irresistible Pierrot, or, what was the same thing, the insolent, attractive, and ever joyous Gaspard Déburau. "An actor without passion, without speech, almost without visage," wrote Jules Janin, "he says all, he expresses all, he laughs at everything. He could act all the plays of Molière without opening his mouth. He stands high above the stupidities of his time, and yet gives them inimitable life." Was ever compliment more heroic paid to a man of genius?

And what were the dramas which Déburau, with a jerk of the head and the turn of a foot, converted into masterpieces? They were for the most part the work of sorry hacks, invented between this bottle and the next in some wine-shop on the Boulevard du Temple. "Authors!" cried M. Bertrand, manager of the Funambules, with a nonchalant pride in himself and his theatre, "What are authors?" And so powerful was the tradition, so quick the genius of the actor, so skilful the arrangement of the stage, that for thirty years failure was unknown. Once only in the classic age of the pantomime did literary talent come to the aid of

Pierrot, when Charles Nodier contrived his *SONGE D'OR* for the glory of Déburau, and under so strict a seal of anonymity that he could freely chaunt the praises of his own work. But if the mime was left to find his material where he might, poets, novelists and critics were generous in their homage; and, though he never won official applause, he enjoyed no less celebrity than Talma, the one conspicuous rival in his art.

And to-day, after half a century, his example is still fresh. Though you may recover his perfections in the eulogies of his contemporaries, though the few lithographed portraits which remain suggest at once his elegant sprightliness and the quick movement of his expressive features, it is in the *'CHAND D'HABITS* as interpreted by Severin that you best realise the achievement of Gaspard Déburau. For not only does Severin appear in a rôle created by the master; he plays his part in strict accordance with the master's tradition. He is not an actor who for the moment has suppressed his voice; he is a mime, and nothing but a mime, rich in the qualities, rich even in the limitations of his art. That he might be fit to speak by glance and gesture, he has clowned it in a circus. He has performed the antics of an acrobat to give his limbs a proper suppleness. Better than all, he has learned from the son, Charles Déburau, the father's priceless lessons. Indeed between him and the incomparable genius of the *Funambules* there is but a single link, and his performance carries you back to the perfection of fifty years since. He is still the petulant, mischievous, ill-fated child whom Déburau discovered. Heartless and amiable by turns, heedlessly he commits his crime and repents hereafter in terrified remorse. The resurrection of the play, contrived by M. Mendès, is curious

enough. First played in 1841, it would doubtless have followed a hundred others into obscurity had it not suggested to Théophile Gautier a prodigious fantasy. The critic described it with all the gusto of a rapid imagination; he compared its invention to Shakespeare, speaking easily of *HAMLET* and *MACBETH*. He set the miserable Pierrot in a dozen changing lights, and glorified his performance with so vivid an enthusiasm, that he seemed to bring the enchanting Déburau back to the stage. It is in this impassioned criticism, not in the cold prose of the original, that M. Mendès has sought his inspiration; and, despite the intervening years, despite the limelight, despite the sumptuous environment, you forget the *Folies Bergères*, and transport yourself to the *Théâtre des Funambules*, where for twopence you smelt the sawdust and covered your eyes before the dazzling brilliance of Bengal lights.

When the curtain goes up Pierrot is discovered hanging to a lamp-post, in the hope that he may soften the heart of his lady, Musidora. The pain and misery depicted upon his whitened face suggest a hopeless passion and approaching death; but cunning triumphs, and no sooner does Musidora enter with *Cassandre* than she pities first and then adores. Speedily Pierrot is cut down, and restored to a life which he had not the smallest intention to desert; for, indeed, the hanging was but a trick, and he presently greets the friendly lamp-post with a gesture of contempt. His happiness, however, is fleeting. Musidora invites him to a ball, and he, poor devil, accepts, though he knows too well that he cannot present himself without a disguise. And how shall he, who has not a halfpenny in his pocket, purchase a coat wherewith to cover the white blouse of his calling? Left

alone to find some way of salvation he hears the cry of the old-clothes' man, '*Chand d'habits ! 'Chand d'habits !* In vain he implores the ancient to give him a coat : the Jew will make no present without his proper reward ; and Pierrot, driven to despair, seizes a sword which hangs at the Jew's shoulder, kills him with his own weapon, rifles his pack, and throws the body into a cellar. His remorse lives but an instant. Has he not a coat, and shall he not cut a triumphant figure before his Musidora ? He summons a barber, has his hair trimmed, and prepares for the festival. But even before he can start on his journey he hears with horror the haunting cry, '*Chand d'habits ! 'Chand d'habits !* and sees the hairdresser transformed to the spectre of his victim. Shuddering with fear, he throws himself upon the wraith, believes himself the fool of a nightmare, and sets off again with a good heart to pay homage to the lady. The scene changes to the ballroom, and none dances with lighter gaiety than Pierrot, from whose mind the mere memory of his crime is effaced. But retribution is only halting, and when he would replace his emptied glass it is the old-clothes-man, transfixed with the blood-red sword, who holds the tray. Thus he wavers between the happiness of Musidora's love and the horror of the ghostly voice which none hears save himself. Faster and faster whirls the dance, until Pierrot, wild with excitement, picks a quarrel with Cassandre, and insulting his rival, has no resource but to accept a challenge. Once more the scene changes, this time to the field of battle. Pierrot and Cassandre arrive with their seconds, and the duel begins with scrupulous formality. But no sooner has Pierrot driven his adversary from the ground than he hears again the voice of the murdered

Jew, who this time clutches the hapless victim in his arms, transfixes him with the bloody sword which caused his own death, and after a Mephistophelean waltz round the stage, drags him to hell, a fitting corner for the transformation scene.

Such is the bare outline of the pantomime which suggested to Gautier *MACBETH* and the Ghost of Banquo before it was slashed and docked to suit the indolent temper of a modern audience. The scene in hell is a manifest absurdity, and with a more fervent faith a defter restoration had been possible. It is difficult to imagine a better motive for the art of Pierrot. It possesses all those elements of sublimity and ridicule, of terror and gaiety which are essential to the art of pantomime. And admirably does Severin play his part. Doubtless he lacks the charm and suppleness which tradition ascribes to Déburau ; but he knows how to shudder and he knows how to smile, and he forces his audience to smile and shudder too. With his floured face and white costume he dominates the stage, even when he hangs upon the lamp-post, and like all consummate actors he has a fine presence. His lucidity is perfect ; the words are there, only they are not allowed to come tripping to the tongue, and the play gains immensely from the silence. Were the argument set forth with a common prolixity, it would lose its mystery and with its mystery its grandeur. And Severin himself is never prolix. His gestures are definite, simple, and free from the mere suspicion of restlessness. Though he can dance with the maddest of them, though he can make love with an ardour which is childlike and pathetic, he never oversteps the bounds of reticence, and there is an ingenuous dignity even in his discomfiture. His face, moreover, is the true Pierrot's face ; and his

features are as expressive as possible on this side distortion. To see him is to realise the ancient charm of pantomime, and to marvel once more at the decay of a beautiful art.

Shall it not, then, be revived? There is no lack of dramas, since the industry of M. Péricaud has recovered the masterpieces which Déburau's creation has rendered famous; and the example of Severin proves that a school still exists with an unbroken tradition. But there is little chance of another *Funambules*, where the *BOEUF ENRAGÉ*, the *PIERROT SAVETIER*, and the *BILLET DE MILLE FRANCS* shall be performed from end to end with no other accompaniment than a modest orchestra. In London we have a concoction of processions and the music-hall which we falsely style pantomime, and which is sufficient to gratify an idle taste. For the rest, the amateur will exult in such iso-

lated experiments as 'CHAND D'HABITS and the *PROCÈS DES ROSES*, another achievement of Severin's own,—the exquisite monologue of Pierrot mad with love, who mistakes three roses for his unfaithful mistresses, attacks them as advocate, tries them as judge, decapitates them as executioner, and deploras their loss with the inconstant regret of a crazy child. But the delicate art applauded by Aristotle and Lucian, by George Sand and Baudelaire, will be left to languish; for in its admiration the greatest talents were united with the people. Charles Nodier took a box on the Boulevard du Temple by the year; Gautier sat side by side with workmen in their shirt-sleeves, equal to his neighbours in the appreciation of genius. To-day neither the workman nor the wit may gratify his taste; for we live under the tyranny of the middle class, and the burgesse dominates us even in our pleasures.

EL DORADO.¹

WE have often wondered why the famous legend of El Dorado had never found its way into romance. Buried treasure has been the theme of many a tale since Poe wrote *THE GOLD BEETLE*, and the success of Stevenson's *TREASURE ISLAND* seemed to have given the subject a new lease of life. But with the exception of Charles Kingsley in *WESTWARD HO!* where it forms only an incident in the career of Amyas Leigh, we can recall no writer of fiction who has thought of utilising the great Spanish tradition. For upwards of two centuries the fabled city of Manoa baffled the courage, the perseverance, and the greed of the stoutest spirits; Spain alone is said to have lavished more lives on this single enterprise than it cost her to conquer the New World. And still the mysterious city lay somewhere in that mighty maze of river and forest and mountain which stretched from the Andes to the Atlantic, with its golden palaces gleaming in the fairy lake, as Jack Brimblecombe shrewdly suspected, like the gold which lies where the rainbow touches the ground, always a field beyond you. And it has been in romance as in reality. Though the novel of adventure is once more in vogue, and though the cry is general that all possible themes have long ago been exhausted, this still was left untouched; the story-tellers seem to have thought the quest as hopeless as the adventurers found it. Within the last few years the legends

of the great conquest have been revived, the magic that once lay in the name of the Spanish Main has begun to work again, and buccaneer and pirate have strutted once more across the pages of fiction; and still no mortal eye was even in fancy permitted to gaze upon the golden city of Manoa.

The omission has now been made good. The hidden city has been found, and found twice over, within the last twelve months. The triumph of James Strickland and his Indian friend, or of Leonard Elwood and Jack Templemore, may not be destined to live so long as the failure of Amyas Leigh and Will Cary; but that is a possibility which need not affect our welcome to Mr. Rider Haggard and Mr. Aubrey.

Mr. Haggard (whose active fancy has led him into these regions before) has ignored the old Spanish tradition which placed the golden city in South America, somewhere in *Tierra Firme*, as the country was then called, somewhere, that is to say, in that vast region between the Andes and the Atlantic, whose southern boundary is formed by the waters of the Amazon. He has chosen an Indian fable which, in this form at least, does not seem to be of very ancient growth, though it may be in part a revival of the wandering tales circulated by the early conquerors of Mexico, and especially by the monk Marcos of Nirza, which Herrera has recorded. At any rate Mr. Haggard can show warranty for his choice; and, indeed, there seems no good reason why the descendants of the Aztecs of Mexico should not have had

¹ 1. *HEART OF THE WORLD*; by H. Rider Haggard. London, 1896.

2. *THE DEVIL-TREE OF EL DORADO*; by Frank Aubrey. London, 1896.

their golden city as well as the descendants of the Incas of Peru. Since the vision of its fairy palaces first rose upon men's minds Manoa has had no fixed abiding-place, and when the legend became finally discredited in the country of its birth, which was not till late in the last century, it may well have travelled some few hundred leagues north in search of a new home.

At all events such a legend was existing in Central America about sixty years ago. When Mr. John Stephens was in that country in 1839-40 on a confidential mission from the United States he heard rumours of a mysterious city lying somewhere in the district of Vera Paz on the northern frontier of Guatemala, between that province and Mexico. It was a wild, unsettled region, part of the old *Tierra de Guerra*, or Land of War, which the Spaniards had never been able to conquer. The good *Las Casas*, indeed, managed to bring some part of the inhabitants into the Christian faith, or into that semblance of it which the Indians can be persuaded to assume; but even in Mr. Stephens's time (and it is, we believe, much the same now) the north-eastern part of the district, bounded by the range of the *Cordilleras* and the Mexican province of *Chiapas*, was peopled by an untamed and warlike tribe, living precisely as their fathers had lived for centuries before them, owning no rule but their own, and averse to the intrusion of any white man. It was within this district that Indian tradition placed the wondrous city; but Mr. Stephens did not rely on Indian tradition alone. The rector of *Santa Cruz del Quiche* had assured him that the city was no phantom of fable but a solid fact. The good father was a cheerful and intelligent old gentleman, whose varied experiences, both

in the old world and the new, had made him a laughing philosopher in the most literal sense of the word. One of the few things, outside his Church, at which he did not laugh, was the hidden city, for from his eyes it had not been hidden. On the other side of the great mountain range, four days' journey on the road to Mexico, it lay, living, large, and populous, inhabited by a race of Indians leading the same life and practising the same rites as their ancestors before Columbus discovered America. He had heard of it long ago at the village of *Chajul*, and had been assured by the villagers that it was plainly to be seen from the summit of the range. Being young then, active and enterprising, and perhaps not yet inclined to turn everything to laughter, he had climbed with much labour to the topmost ridge, and his toil had not been unrewarded. Below him lay an immense plain, stretching away league after league to the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, and far out on this plain he could see the city, covering a vast space of ground and crowned with many towers and cupolas shining in the sun. It was said in *Chajul* that no European had ever set foot in the city, nor even ventured down into the plain. The inhabitants, who spoke the old Maya tongue, had just so much knowledge of the outer world as to be aware that a conquering race of white strangers had overrun the rest of the country, and they had sworn death to every foreigner found within their borders. They had no coin or other circulating medium, no horses nor cattle, nor any domestic animals, except fowls, and the cocks were kept underground to prevent their crowing from being heard¹.

¹ INCIDENTS OF TRAVEL IN CENTRAL AMERICA, CHIAPAS, AND YUCATAN; by John L. Stephens, II., 193-7. Two volumes, London, 1841.

Such was the priest's tale, and Mr. Stephens seems to have been half inclined to believe it. He had satisfied himself that the district had never been explored, and that it owned no allegiance either to Mexico or Guatemala. A large ruined city was said to be visible from the same range, and he had heard of a man who had been curious enough to make the ascent, but unfortunately on a day when the summit had been wrapped in clouds. It was impossible for Mr. Stephens to enter the country, even had it been safe to make the attempt, nor could he even spare the time to ascend the mountain. And so the matter rests. Mr. Squier, who travelled in these regions some ten years after Mr. Stephens, and in something of a similar capacity, seems never to have heard of the story; at least he makes no mention of it in his volumes, though he was a most assiduous student of the history and antiquities of the country. He was never actually in Guatemala or Chiapas, but if the legend had anything more than a local circulation he could hardly have missed hearing it.¹

Mr. Stephens does not seem to have known Herrera's great history, nor the English version of it.² He would have been surprised to find how curious a resemblance his friend's story bears to that related three hundred years earlier by Marcos of Nirza. Marcos was a monk of the Franciscan order who, in the year 1538, was sent by the Viceroy of Mexico, Don An-

tonio de Mendoza, into the northern district of the new colony, New Galicia, as it was subsequently called, answering to the present State of Colorado. His ostensible mission was of course to convert the natives; but he was also ordered to report on the country generally, and especially to ascertain the truth of certain rumours of principalities and powers which had reached the Viceroy's ears. How far Marcos penetrated is not very clear, as it is not easy to localise the old Indian names on a modern map; but he brought back with him wonderful tales of a rich and powerful kingdom called Cibola, abounding in gold and precious stones and containing seven great cities all built of stone. He did not profess to have entered this kingdom, but, like Moses, he had been permitted to catch a glimpse of its splendours. When within a day's march of its borders he heard of the massacre of his Indian allies whom he had sent on in advance, and thought it prudent to call a halt; but, resolved not to be altogether foiled, he made his guides conduct him to the top of a high hill, from which they told him something was to be seen. From this Pisgah he looked over a vast plain, in the centre of which lay a large city, larger, he said, than Mexico, and indeed the finest he had ever seen, the houses all built of stone, two stories high, and with flat roofs. He returned by another way, through a pleasant country full of fine towns and, so his guides said, of gold. His faith in these Indians seems to have been unbounded, but his own countrymen, the old chronicler shrewdly adds, were not inclined to trust him to the same extent. Marcos, however, had not been altogether romancing. A few years later the Viceroy despatched another and a stronger party into the same regions, and the monk's statements were then

¹ TRAVELS IN CENTRAL AMERICA, PARTICULARLY IN NICARAGUA; by E. G. Squier. New York, 1853.

² HISTORIA GENERAL DE LAS INDIAS OCCIDENTALES; by Antonio de Herrera. Five volumes; Madrid, 1601-15. Our English version by Captain John Stevens (six volumes, London, 1725-6), though taking great liberties in the way of abridgment and omission, is in Prescott's opinion superior, on the whole, to most of the old English translations of the Spanish chroniclers.

to some extent verified. The explorers found no gold nor precious stones, nor any town so large as Mexico; but it was a pleasant, well-watered land, well stocked with cattle and peopled by a friendly race of Indians; they found many towns also which were certainly built of stone, but the largest did not contain more than two or three hundred houses, and there were none at all resembling the magnificent vision of Marcos. Mr. Stephens's friend was a well-read old gentleman, and perhaps his library contained a copy of Herrera's history. However, we need not doubt that he did see a city from his mountain-perch. Ruined cities are not rare in those parts, and at the distance from which he beheld his vision it must have been no easy matter to distinguish between a dead and a living town.

Such at any rate is the legend which Mr. Haggard has taken and embellished with his practised fancy. It would be something almost of an impertinence to describe a story which everybody with a wholesome taste for tales of adventure will long ago have read. The majority of his readers possibly did not know, and did not care, what authority he had, if any, for his romance; but those familiar with Mr. Stephens's delightful book will recognise what skilful use Mr. Haggard has made of the somewhat scanty materials for his purpose that he found in it. That, however, will surprise nobody. It needed not HEART OF THE WORLD to assure us that the author of KING SOLOMON'S MINES and ALLAN QUATERMAIN was an accomplished story-teller.

Mr. Aubrey, on the other hand, has gone back to the old legend, and placed El Dorado on the summit of the mysterious mountain Roraima,¹ in that debatable land between the pro-

vinces of Venezuela and British Guiana which, after years of wrangling and more than one threat of war, diplomacy has now taken in hand. He has chosen a lordly throne, for Roraima, though only some eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, is the highest in all that part of the country. It is the culminating point of the sandstone ridge which is, according to Schomburgk, the most remarkable feature of the great chain of mountains stretching from the Corentyne to the Orinoco over more than nine degrees of longitude. Down the face of this ridge, which extends about thirty miles from north-west to south-east, rush numerous cascades; it is, in fact, the watershed of the three great rivers of the northern half of South America, the Amazon, the Orinoco, and the Essequibo, and thus amply justifies the title claimed for it by the Indians of the ever-fruited mother of streams.¹ It affords also a fine field for the exercise of Mr. Aubrey's fancy, for from the beginning of time no mortal man is known to have stood on the summit of Roraima. Sir Robert Schomburgk was the first European to set eyes on the mountain, unless he is right in identifying it with the mountain of crystal which Raleigh saw from a distance "like a white church tower of an exceeding height," and of which he heard many strange tales from Berreo, the Spanish Governor of Trinidad: "There falleth over it a mighty river which toucheth no part of the side of the mountain, but rusheth over the top of it, and falleth to the ground with a terrible noise and clamour, as if one thousand great bells were knocked one against another." To later travellers, at all events, Roraima has

¹ THE DISCOVERY OF GUIANA, by Sir Walter Raleigh; edited by Sir Robert Schomburgk, pp. 75, 101, notes. Printed for the Hakluyt Society, London, 1848.

¹ *Roreema* according to the Indian pronunciation.

shown itself less like a white tower than a perpendicular wall of red rock. The summit of this wall, however, is often wrapped in clouds, and may have been so when Raleigh saw it; and Mr. Brown and Mr. Whetham both bear testimony to the number and volume of its waterfalls. It is never easy in Raleigh's narrative to distinguish what he heard from what he saw; and certainly, if his description of the crystal mountain suggested Roraima to Schomburgk, it would need a bold man to advance a different explanation.

Roraima has for centuries been a mountain of mystery and magic to the Indians, who even now evince the strongest dislike to approach it, and are persuaded that their gods will never suffer the ascent to be made. They have peopled the surrounding forests with demons (numerous as quails, as one of them declared to Mr. Whetham), and guarded it with a huge *camoodi*, or serpent, capable of entangling a hundred men in its coils. European enterprise has found more practical objections to the ascent, which both Mr. Brown and Mr. Whetham have satisfied themselves can only be made by a balloon. In 1869 Mr. Brown climbed the lower slopes to a height of five thousand feet or so above the sea-level, but could make no further way. A thick belt of forest rose before him, and above it, like a huge fortress surrounded by a gigantic glacis, towered a perpendicular wall of red, white, and pink sandstone from eighteen hundred to two thousand feet high; a few small trees and shrubs clung here and there to its surface where their roots

could find a hold, and the table-land on the summit was crowned with forest. This was all he could see of Roraima. Nine years later Mr. Boddam-Whetham reached the same point as Mr. Brown, but only, like him, to be baffled. From east and west and south he made a long and careful survey of these impregnable walls, but was forced to own himself beaten at all points; while the Indians, to whom he appealed with every offer likely to tempt their cupidity, could only shake their heads, and beat their breasts, and with many grunts and gesticulations avow that there was no way up the "red-rocked night mountain" accessible to mortal foot. It had been so from the birth of time, and so it would ever be.

But Romance can find a way over the mountains, as the poets say that Love can. Mr. Aubrey leads his readers to the summit of Roraima, and shows them the ancient city of Manoa, with all its palaces and towers, its gardens and groves and orchards, fringing the shores of a lake which, nestling within the forest-crowned battlements of the great rock-fortress, feeds the innumerable cascades which burst in thunder down its walls. King Dranoa seems to have abandoned the custom of his ancestors, and no longer exhibits a literal claim to the title of El Dorado; but there are still gold and jewels enough about him and his palace and his city to have satisfied even a Spaniard of the Conquest. Mr. Aubrey has, moreover, embellished his pages with a more fearful object than the *camoodi* of Indian superstition, for which there is indeed some warranty in those huge serpents which haunt the forests of South America. His title is no misnomer; the Devil-Tree plays no inconsiderable part in his tale. For a description of this carnivorous monster (which we think we can remember to have met with

¹ 1. CANOE AND CAMP LIFE IN BRITISH GUIANA; by C. Barrington Brown. London, 1876.

² 2. RORAIMA AND BRITISH GUIANA; by J. W. Boddam-Whetham. London, 1879.

³ 3. AMONG THE INDIANS OF GUIANA; by E. F. im Thurn. London, 1883.

before in fiction) we must refer our readers to Mr. Aubrey's own pages, where, if they love to sup on horrors, we can assure them that they will find an ample meal; it is a subject altogether beyond our prosaic pen.

Mr. Aubrey claims for his tale something more than to while away an idle hour; he trusts that it will stir Englishmen up to the importance of securing this wonderful mountain as a British possession. According to the original line of frontier drawn by Schomburgk, Roraima is a part of British Guiana; but Mr. Barrington Brown, when he explored that country for our Government, placed it within the Venezuelan boundary, while Mr. Thurn seems inclined to assign it to Brazil. This, with many other debatable matters, will no doubt be amicably settled in the forthcoming arbitration between our country and Venezuela; but should the latter's claim to the mountain be allowed, we need hardly mourn it as a national loss to England. Mr. Aubrey does not, we presume, expect us to take his entertaining romance so seriously as to believe that the golden city is actually to be found on the summit of Roraima. It would, of course, be gratifying to our national love of enterprise to think that, if the mountain is ever to be scaled, an Englishman should be the first to scale it. But there would, we conceive, be no insuperable objection on the part either of Venezuela or Brazil to the ascent being attempted by strangers. Englishmen are allowed to risk their lives every year on the Alps, the Caucasus, and the Andes without any remonstrance, so far as we know, on the part of Switzerland, Russia, or the South American Republics. It is hard to believe that even that foolishness of created beings, a Senator of the United States, would find a pretext for war in the prospect of an Englishman breaking his neck

on a mountain which did not belong to him.

But after all no one will care to do more than smile at this little fanfaronade on Mr. Aubrey's part. If he likes to claim for his story a more serious complexion than his readers are perhaps disposed to give it, who shall quarrel with him? Into another part of his preface, however, there has crept a slight confusion which suggests that, though he has gone back to the old legend of *El Dorado*, he has not quite mastered its real origin and history. He seems to have been misled by the following passage in Richard Schomburgk's book on British Guiana.

The geological structure of this region leaves but little doubt that it was once the bed of an inland lake which, by one of those catastrophes of which even later times gives us examples, broke its barriers, forcing for its waters a path to the Atlantic. May we not connect with the former existence of this inland sea the fable of the lake Parima and [the] *El Dorado*? Thousands of years may have elapsed; generations may have been buried and returned to dust; nations who once wandered on its banks may be extinct and exist no more in name; still the tradition of Parima and [the] *El Dorado* survived these changes of time; transmitted from father to son, its fame was carried across the Atlantic and kindled the romantic fire of the chivalrous Raleigh.¹

Mr. Aubrey quotes this passage apparently with the intention of suggesting some sort of reason for his fancy of establishing *El Dorado* on the summit of Roraima. In those remote ages of which the German traveller dreamed, when the inland sea spread from the highlands of Venezuela to the Andes, the mountain

¹ REISEN IN BRITISH GUIANA. Leipzig, 1847-8. We presume Mr. Aubrey to be translating some passage in this book, but our researches have not enabled us to verify it. We can hardly, however, believe that Schomburgk can have written the *El Dorado*, which would be as superfluous as to write the *the Iron Duke*.

tops would have been the only firm land, as in the days of Pyrrha's flood,

When Proteus led his flocks to climb
The flattened heights ;
When fish were in the elm-tops caught
Where once the stock-dove went to
bide,
And does were floating, all distraught,
Adown the tide.

"In this great supposed ancient lake," writes Mr. Aubrey, "the group of islands now represented by mountain summits might well have been the home of a powerful and conquering race,—as is to-day Japan with its group of more than three thousand islands—and Roraima, as the highest, and therefore the most easily defensible, may very well have been selected as their fastness, and the site of their capital city." This is all geologically possible, no doubt, but as a matter of history it has no more to do with the Spanish legend of El Dorado than with the English legend of Little Jack Horner. For aught any man knows to the contrary, there may have been thousands of years ago on the summit of Mount Roraima a city built by human hands and inhabited by human beings ; but the legend of El Dorado dates only from the year 1535, and the fabled city of Manoa was the home, not of a conquering, but of a conquered race.

There appears to be a popular misapprehension of the true significance of the phrase El Dorado. It originally signified not a city, or a district, but a man, *the Golden or Gilded One*, the king of the city of Manoa. The Spaniards seem first to have heard of this shining potentate in 1535, from an Indian of New Granada, who had come down to Quito on an embassy from the cacique of Bogota to the Inca of Peru. News must have travelled slowly in those days. It is no great distance from Bogota to Quito ; but the ambassador found that

Atahualpa had been nearly two years dead, and that the empire of the Incas had passed into other hands. However, he was courteously received by the white strangers, who listened greedily to all his wondrous tales of the riches of his country and the splendour of its chiefs. All savages are naturally boastful, and the natives had been quick to discover that Spanish credulity could stomach any marvel that promised to minister to Spanish avarice. Among this Indian's stories was one which especially caught his hearers' attention, of a certain great lord who, "his body covered with powdered gold, went into a lake amid the mountains." A legend grows like a snowball, and as the Spaniards were but very imperfectly acquainted with the Indian language, there was little to hinder them from the free exercise of their own imagination. When four years later Gonzales Pizarro set out on that expedition across the Andes which resulted in the discovery of the cinnamon tree and eventually of the river Amazon, the Golden King had become a very circumstantial figure. "He was," wrote Oviedo to Cardinal Bembo, "always covered with powdered gold, so that from head to foot he resembled an image of gold fashioned by the hand of a skilful workman. The powdered gold is fixed on the body by means of an odoriferous resin ; but as this kind of garment would be uneasy to him while he slept, the prince washes himself every evening, and is gilded anew in the morning, which proves that the empire of El Dorado is infinitely rich in mines." Such were the first beginnings of the legend of El Dorado, and the year 1535 marks its first entrance into the province of history.¹

¹ A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF TRAVELS TO THE EQUINOCTIAL REGIONS OF AMERICA DURING THE YEARS 1799-1804 ; by Alexander

The gilded man was not wholly a creature of the Indian's imagination. Some forty years before the Spaniards landed in Peru, and while the little province of Guatavita was still independent, its chief used every year to perform a solemn sacrifice to the deity who was believed to reside in a sacred lake among the mountains. On the appointed day, having first smeared his body with turpentine and then rolled himself in gold dust, he was rowed into the centre of the lake, accompanied by his nobles and watched from the shores by an immense concourse of people. Having made his offerings to the deity by casting into the waters gold, jewels and other precious things, he proceeded to bathe himself in the sacred element amid the rapturous applause of his subjects. The ceremony seems to have been discontinued after the conquest of Guatavita by the neighbouring chief of Bogota, but the fame of it survived, and the people of Guatavita continued for many years to propitiate their watery deity with precious offerings. Early in this century an attempt was made to drain the lake, which is but a short distance from Bogota, and gold ornaments have occasionally been brought up from it; but it is still a popular belief among the country people that millions of treasure lie buried beneath its waters.

It will be obvious how the lake, on the shores of which Manoa was supposed to stand, came into the story. But the legend soon received another accretion which contributed more than anything else to fix it in the imagination of the Spaniards. After the von Humboldt; (translated, new edition) London, 1859. The 25th chapter contains probably the most complete account of the legend of *El Dorado* existing in our language. See also the preface by Sir Clements Markham to *THE EXPEDITION OF PEDRO DE URSUA AND LOPE DE AGUIRRE IN SEARCH OF EL DORADO AND OMAGUA*, printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1861.

death of Manco, the elder brother of Atahualpa and legitimate heir of Huayna Capac, a rumour arose (though whether originating among the Spaniards or Indians it is impossible to say) that another and last survivor of the royal race of the Incas had fled across the Andes with a large following of people and a vast quantity of treasure to found a greater empire than that which his family had lost. This new monarch went by various names, the Great Paytiti, the Great Moxo, the Enim or Great Paru; and various tracts of country were assigned for his kingdom, as the Spaniards advanced eastward over the Andes, and each new tribe which they encountered, anxious to save their own territory, told them of treasure to be found in abundance a little farther on,—always a little farther on, as Jack Brimblecombe hinted, like the gold which lies at the foot of the rainbow. And so the legend grew, each fresh rumour which the Spaniards, only imperfectly understanding, interpreted by the light of their own insatiable greed, adding fuel to the flame. The wish fathered the thought: the kingdom took the title of the king; and *El Dorado* at last became the recognised name of a region, far richer than any the conquerors had yet discovered, which was certainly situated somewhere between the Andes and the Atlantic, and probably somewhere in the region watered by the Orinoco and its tributaries. For close upon two centuries and a half the golden towers of Manoa still rose on the horizon of fancy to lure men to their death. Year after year these dauntless dreamers went forth eastward from Peru or New Grenada, or westward from Venezuela or Guiana, to lay their bones in unknown graves among those vast forests or by those lonely streams. Probably no legend which has ever taken the imagination

captive has been so prolific of fruitless valour, and certainly few, if any, so stained with human blood.

It is quite unnecessary to join Hume, as some later writers have been disposed to do, in denouncing Raleigh's account of his expedition to Guiana as full of gross and palpable lies which he did not himself believe and only repeated to further his own ambition. Three hundred years ago men believed much which they have since rejected, not always to their profit. His HISTORY OF THE WORLD proves that Raleigh had his fair share of the credulity common to his age. With the question of his belief in the Amazons and the Ewaipanoma, or headless men, we are not now concerned, though we may observe that Schomburgk heard stories quite as strange still current in Guiana fifty years ago; but there can be as little doubt that he was firmly convinced of the existence of gold in Guiana as there need be now that he was right in his belief. And as for the kingdom of El Dorado what was there, as Kingsley says, incredible in that to imaginations yet reeling before the actual and veritable prodigies of Mexico and Peru and the East Indies? The realities of that wonderful new world which, when Raleigh wrote, was but a century old, were in truth strange enough to those unlearned eyes and simple hearts to make nothing seem impossible. It must be remembered also that Raleigh never professed to have seen the city of Manoa, nor to have met with anybody who had seen it; he only repeated the popular tradition which he had learned from his study of the Spanish chroniclers, embellished with the accounts received from various Spaniards whom he met at Trinidad, and especially from Berreo, governor of the island, who had himself led an expedition in search of the fabled city.

Berreio had in his possession the copy of a manuscript said to have been written by Juan Martinez, master of the ordnance to Diego de Ordaz, one of the victims of El Dorado. Either Berreo or Raleigh must have made a mistake here. Ordaz, who had been with Cortez in Mexico, made his voyage up the Orinoco in 1531, two years before the death of Atahualpa, and several years before the tradition of the new empire of the Incas had come into being; whereas the writer of this manuscript (which he was said to have entrusted to his confessor as he lay dying in Porto Rico) professes to have seen with his own eyes the brother of the great Inca reigning in glorious state in the city of Manoa. Humboldt explains the difficulty by supposing Raleigh to have confused the expedition of Ordaz with that of Pedro de Silva in 1574, and that Juan Martinez was really Juan Martin de Albuzar, one of Silva's followers, who was taken prisoner by the Indians of the Lower Orinoco, made himself happy with a native wife, and for several years lived with the savages as one of themselves. He afterwards returned to civilisation, and travelled from city to city on the Main, relating his adventures, in which what he had seen was doubtless freely embellished with what he had heard, after the fashion of Raleigh himself. John Hagthorpe, a contemporary of Raleigh and author of a book called ENGLAND'S EXCHEQUER, roundly declared the whole tale to be an invention of the fat friars, as he called them, to stir men up to the exploration of these golden lands from which they might reap the profit. If there be any truth in the story of the author having entrusted his manuscript to his confessor, it is possible that the good father may have added something on his own account; but Humboldt believes the narrative to

have been merely a combination of the various Spanish legends with the tales told to the writer by the Caribs, who are still renowned as the most superstitious and inventive of all the South American Indians. We will give the story of this first and only visit to Manoa in Raleigh's own words, but not in his own spelling. Martinez, as has been said, was master of the ordnance to Ordaz, and the powder provided for the expedition having by his negligence been set on fire, he was condemned to death by the general. On the intercession of the soldiers, however, capital punishment was remitted; and Martinez was sent adrift on the Orinoco in a canoe, with his arms but without any food.

It pleased God that the canoe was carried down the stream, and that certain of the Guianians met it the same evening, and having not at any time seen any Christians, nor any man of that colour, they carried Martinez into the land to be wondered at, and so from town to town, until he came to the great city of Manoa, the seat and residence of Inca, the Emperor. The Emperor, after he had beheld, knew him to be a Christian (for it was not long before that his brethren Huascar and Atahualpa were vanquished by the Spaniards in Peru) and caused him to be lodged in his palace and well entertained. He lived seven months in Manoa, but not suffered to wander into the country anywhere: he was also brought thither all the way blindfolded, led by the Indians, until he came to the entrance of Manoa itself: and was fourteen or fifteen days in the passage. He avowed at his death that he entered the city at noon, and then they uncovered his face, and that he travelled all that day till night through the city, and the next day from sun-rising to sun-setting, ere he came to the palace of Inca. After that Martinez had lived seven months in Manoa, and began to understand the language of the country, Inca asked him whether he desired to return to his own country, or would willingly abide with him; but Martinez, not desirous to stay, obtained the favour of Inca to depart, with whom he sent divers Guianians to conduct him to the river of Orinoco all laden with as much gold as they could carry, which he

gave to Martinez at his departure. But when he was arrived near the river's side, the borderers, which are called Orinoqueponi, robbed him and his Guianians of all the treasure (the borderers being at that time at war with Inca, and not conquered), save only of two great bottles of gourds, which were filled with beads of gold curiously wrought, which those Orinoqueponi thought had been no other thing than his drink or meat or grain for food, with which Martinez had liberty to pass, and so in canoes he fell down by the river of Orinoco to Trinidad, and from thence to Marguerita, and so to Saint Juan de Puerto Rico, where, remaining a long time for passage into Spain, he died. In the time of his extreme sickness and when he was without hope of life, receiving the sacrament at the hands of his confessor, he delivered these things with the relation of his travels, and also called for his calabash, or gourds of the gold beads, which he gave to the Church and friars to be prayed for. This Martinez was he that christened the city of Manoa by the name of El Dorado, and as Berreo informed me upon this occasion. These Guianians, and also the borderers, and all others in that tract which I have seen, are marvellous great drunkards, in which vice I think no nation can compare with them; and at the times of their solemn feasts, when the Emperor carouseth with his captains, the manner is thus. All those that pledge him are first stripped naked, and their bodies anointed all over with a kind of white balsamum (by them called *curcaí*) of which there is a great plenty and yet very dear amongst them, and it is of all others the most precious, whereof we have had good experience. When they are anointed all over, certain servants of the Emperor having prepared gold made into fine powder, blow it through hollow canes upon their naked bodies, until they be all shining from the foot to the head, and in this sort they sit drinking by twenties and hundreds and continue in drunkenness sometimes six or seven days together; the same is also confirmed by a letter written into Spain which Master Robert Dudley told me he had seen. Upon this sight, and for the abundance of gold which he saw in the city, the images of gold in their temples, the plates, armours, and shields of gold which they use in the wars, he called it El Dorado.

It will be noticed that Raleigh vouches for no part of this story

beyond the drunken habits of the natives, and to those all travellers both before and since have borne ample testimony. But though Martin (if the manuscript be really his) may have been only repeating what he had heard and read and never seen, the tale itself is recognised now to have been no baseless creation of fancy. When Humboldt was in Guiana he found a custom still prevailing among some of the wilder tribes of anointing their bodies with fat and then covering them with glittering spangles of mica, which gave them from a distance the appearance of wearing embroidered clothes. It needs no great stretch of the imagination, nor argues any gross credulity, to connect this custom with the fable of the gilded man of Bogota. It is certain that the regions through which the search for *El Dorado* was prosecuted were at the time of their discovery peopled with many powerful tribes, that their villages were often large and populous, and that golden ornaments were common among them. The brutal Alfinger, who in 1530, under the auspices of the German Velsers, the earliest colonisers of Venezuela, led an expedition from Coro westward to the confluence of the Cesar and the Magdalena, plundered a single tribe of treasure to the value of sixty thousand dollars. The legend had not then been born, and Alfinger was but following a phantom of his own imagination; but the air was full of golden fancies long before *El Dorado* rose to give them shape. The new world which Columbus had given to the crown of Castille was to be made of gold, and after the achievements of Cortez the Spaniard saw in every fresh province the possibilities of another Mexico. Ten years later, when the German Philip Von Hutten led his men on a more southerly track than Alfinger's into the lands between the rivers Guaviare and Japura (to

this day an almost unknown region) the fame of Peru had cast even that of Mexico into the shade. The empire of Montezuma could show nothing to match with the treasury of Atahualpa or the marvels of the great Temple of the Sun. Such sights had never yet been vouchsafed to European eyes, and the rude soldiery of Pizarro would have been something more than mortal if any tale had seemed too wild for their belief. Eastward, across the great barrier of the Andes, lay an unknown land immeasurably larger than that which they had conquered, and if report spoke truth, as it was but natural to suppose it did, proportionately richer. When Hutten, marching south into the country of the Omaguas, the wealthiest and most warlike, he was warned, of all the inland tribes, saw from the summit of a hill a town so large that the farther end of it was beyond his sight, what more natural than that he should believe that here at last was Manoa, and that the lofty building rising from the central square, full, so his guides assured him, of golden idols, was in very truth the palace of *El Dorado*? He was not suffered to prove his belief. The Omaguas were too strong for the Spaniards; Hutten himself was severely wounded, and the little force of armoured men was compelled to retreat before a horde of naked Indians. On its return to Coro, which was the starting point of all these German expeditions, Hutten and his brave lieutenant Velser were foully murdered by the orders of Carbajal, a brutal Spaniard who had seized the government during their absence, and with their deaths ended the brief and calamitous period of German rule in Venezuela. When Humboldt visited the country the Omaguas were still a populous tribe, with many traditions and some signs of an ancient civilisa-

tion. It is now certain that all this district, and indeed all the north-eastern region of South America, is to some, though possibly to no great, extent auriferous. The vast city that Hutten saw would probably on a closer inspection have resolved itself into a cluster of villages. It may gratify that form of superiority which a sort of men is so fond of asserting at the expense of their fathers to believe that all these old explorers were grossly credulous and shameless liars. But in truth the legend of *El Dorado* had far more reason in it than many which have met with easier tolerance; and when all allowance has been made for the exaggeration of their excited fancies, which, like the fabled power of Midas, could turn everything it touched into gold, it will be seen that, when examined by the light of later research, most of their beliefs rested on some foundation of truth.

A curious incident is reported to have occurred during Hutten's expedition, which not only illustrates the cold-blooded disregard of human life which characterised the Spanish conquest, but also anticipates in a strange and barbarous fashion the more modern practice of vivisection. Hutten, as has been said, was severely wounded, and his life for some time hung in the balance, till a friendly Indian came to the rescue. An old slave, dressed in the German's armour and placed upon his horse, was wounded by a similar weapon in the same part of the body. He was then cut up, the direction of Hutten's wound discovered, and the cure completed.

In truth one is tempted to say that nothing recorded in history can surpass the courage and endurance of these old Spaniards, but their cruelty. It would be unfair of course to judge them by the standard of our own day; humanity, like science, is a pro-

gressive virtue, and to the superior civilisation of the twenty-second century it is possible that even we ourselves, with all our untiring protestations in the cause of philanthropy, may seem in practice little better than barbarians. Many allowances must also be made for their peculiar and arduous circumstances. Feeling their painful way step by step through an absolutely unknown country, imperfectly supplied with even the necessities of existence, dependent upon guides whose language they hardly understood and on whose faith they could rarely rely, worn with continuous toil, hunger, and sickness, always vastly outnumbered, and too often harassed by mutual jealousies and dissensions, such a life, protracted sometimes for years, must have been a bitter school for men whom nature had not made prone to mercy. Prodigious of their own lives they were little disposed to be careful of others. But nothing can palliate the brutal and senseless ferocity which so often stained their heroic achievements, and dragged the civilised Spaniard below the level of the poor savages whom he slaughtered. It is little wonder that a storm of indignation swept through England at tales which shocked even Spain, tales not coined by fancy nor resting on idle rumour, but narrated in sober truth by Spanish historians on the evidence of men who had witnessed, and possibly shared the bloody work. In one of the deeds ascribed to Alfinger the reader will recognise the germ of an incident in *WESTWARD HO!* That ruffian took with him on his expedition a train of Indian slaves to carry his baggage and provisions. They were fastened to a long chain by rings round their necks, so that, to let one out, it was necessary to loosen the whole row. This was a tedious operation, and Alfinger accordingly ordered his soldiers, when

an Indian became *gastado*, worn out, to cut the man's head off and let the body drop out of the rank, saying that since he was of no further use to them, it was all one whether he was alive or dead, and the trouble of unloosing the chain was saved. In the chapter relating how Amyas and his men took the gold-train from Santa Fé may be seen the use Kingsley made of this pretty piece of economy. Like master, like man; after Alfinger's death the remnant of his band made their way back to Coro, slaughtering every man, woman, and child they found on their march.

But the most notorious of all the expeditions in search of El Dorado was that led down the Amazon by Pedro de Ursua in 1559. Of this extraordinary story, which filled all Europe with astonishment and horror, no less than six accounts are extant. Three of these are contemporary; one of them was written by Francisco Vasquez, a member of the expedition, and the others evidently from equally authentic sources. The one translated for the Hakluyt Society is the work of Fra Pedro Simon; it was published in 1627 and is based mainly on the early manuscripts, especially on that of Vasquez from whom Simon copies freely without any acknowledgment, and it is believed that he must also have consulted other members of the expedition and men conversant with Aguirre's subsequent career. The other two are much later in point of time, and are mainly abstracts of Simon's narrative. Besides these there is an account by Southey, compiled from these various sources. None of these expeditions indeed have been preserved for us in such full and authentic shape, and certainly it forms one of the wildest and bloodiest chapters in all the fierce history of the Spanish Conquest.

Down to the time when Ursua's men broke into open mutiny at the instigation of Aguirre and murdered their leader in his hammock, the story differs only in detail from that of all these wild-goose chases; but from thence onwards to Aguirre's own death in Venezuela it is a mad riot of murder which can be matched only in the annals of the French Revolution. Indeed the Spaniard's conduct is only explicable on the supposition that the lust of blood had turned to madness with him as it did with the insensate ruffians whom certain writers still profess to admire as the apostles of French liberty. To this day the will-of-the-wisp, which is so frequently seen in Margarita and on the lowlands of Venezuela, where the last scenes of this tragedy were enacted, is known as the Soul of the Tyrant, from a belief that the spirit of Aguirre still haunts the theatre of his crimes. After a wild carnival of destruction and slaughter which it is wearisome to read and would be impossible to believe were it not too strictly proved to be doubted, he finally set the seal on his madness by stabbing his own daughter to the heart lest, as he told her, she should live to be called the child of a traitor. But what contributed more than anything else to the melancholy fame of this expedition was the presence of a woman, Dona Inez de Atienza, a young and beautiful widow, who, having fallen passionately in love with the handsome Ursua on his arrival in Peru, followed him literally to the death. The unhappy lady's character has not been very tenderly treated by the historians, all of whom, but one, make her the original cause of all the trouble, which in itself is not improbable, Simon even accusing her of consoling herself for Ursua's death in the arms of one of his officers. But whatever her faults the poor creature amply atoned

for them by her own death, the ruffian Aguirre ordering her to be killed because there was no room in the boat for her and her baggage, an order which was obeyed with every circumstance of brutality.

Within the next twenty years the search was renewed no less than six times from various parts of the continent. The most notable expedition was that of de Silva, which has been already mentioned. In 1569 he made the attempt from Venezuela, and in 1574 he renewed it from a more southerly point in Guiana. In the last every member of the party but one perished, including Silva's two little daughters, the solitary survivor being the aforesaid Juan Martin. Eight years later Antonio de Berreo, who, as son-in-law of de Quesada, the conqueror of Bogota, had inherited the obligations of the legend, led a party from New Granada southwards to the Orinoco, and descending that river to its mouth reached the island of Trinidad, of which he was soon after appointed governor. The phantom of El Dorado had been slowly flitting eastward before the advancing tide of exploration, and when Raleigh entered the mouth of the Orinoco the belief was universal that the golden city was to be found somewhere to the south of that river among the plains watered by the vast network of streams which intersect British Guiana. It was part of the tradition that Manoa should be built on the shores of a great lake, and as no sufficient sheet of water had been discovered inland, the periodical inundations from which these low-lying districts suffered seemed to supply the necessary deficiency. But the fable was beginning now to lose its original virtue. As the rich harvest of the mines of Mexico and Peru grew yearly more abundant, Spain

grew more averse to wasting life and treasure on the pursuit of a dream which, if ever realised, could hardly match this magnificent reality; and with the death of Elizabeth the old adventurous spirit seemed for a time to be dead in England. While Raleigh lived the fable still survived; but with him died the last of the Elizabethans, and with his disastrous venture in 1617 El Dorado may be said to have vanished as an article of European belief. Throughout that century, however, and down almost to the close of the eighteenth, the tradition still lingered on in the countries of its birth, and private enterprise, encouraged, if no longer promoted, by the Spanish governors, still from time to time went out to seek for the great lake and the golden city. Humboldt read the journals of two expeditions conducted during the years 1775-80 up the various tributaries of the Orinoco, and when in the kingdom of Quito he talked with men who had been employed by the bishop to renew the search on the eastern slopes of the Andes. We may truly say that knowledge came, but wisdom lingered. For many generations after Europe had been content to leave Manoa to the possession of its rightful lords, hundreds of lives were still being squandered in the mad chase; but they were not squandered all in vain. Science gained what humanity lost, and thus after all some gold was found at the foot of the rainbow. Men are happily not common now who will face danger and death in every form for what they can add to the sum of human knowledge, or for the pure love of adventure. But it was not always so; and while sneering at the credulity of our forefathers, or affecting disgust at their cupidity, we might still remember how different a place but for that golden bait the world had this day been.

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